

# COVER

ISBN 0 9578877 1 X. June 2005.

Published by George Stevens through ScienceScape Editing Sydney.

Printed by Bradprint

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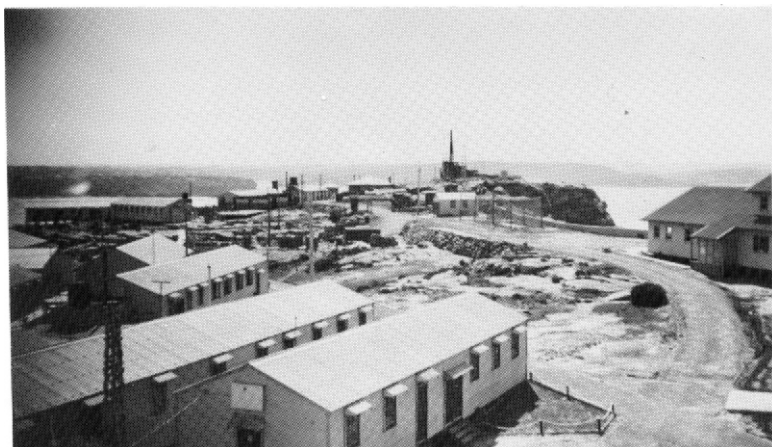
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## Author's Preface

In 1991 I felt it would be appropriate to write a history of the RAN Radio Mechanics who were recruited in the immediate post war period late 1945 through mid 1947. The research necessitated me making personal contact with many whom I had not seen for over 40 years. The outcome of completing and publishing the history was a strong move to hold a reunion, which did occur at what was HMAS "Torrens" at Birkenhead near Adelaide in November 1992. This was successful and led to the formation of the RAN Radio Mechanics Association in 1993.

Since 1992 there have been biennial reunions – Sydney 1994, Canberra 1996, Melbourne 1998, Nowra 2000, Perth 2002, and Caloundra 2004. Over these years the membership has been swelled from the ranks of those who joined the service after 1947 and who were trained at HMAS Cerberus. As well, some known as HOs, (Hostilities Only) who underwent their basic training in the early 1940s at the Melbourne Technical College, later RMIT, have joined our association, bringing the present membership in 2005 to over 550.



*HMAS Watson, the "Fibro" Frigate, taken in 1942 looking westwards towards Sydney Harbour.*

For the 1994 reunion, a booklet outlining the history of HMAS "Watson", at Sydney's South Head, was produced. This added to our little store of recorded history, because "Watson" was where the advanced technical training was carried out. At that 1994 reunion I persuaded a colleague, PRH (Lofty) Watson, to create a history of the development of radar in the RAN.

Lofty did an astonishing amount of research, and for our 1998 reunion, released his excellent book "It's Nothing To Do With Me, I'm Radar". So, we then had a third chronicle of our recorded history.

In thinking about all this while planning to attend the 2004 reunion, it suddenly hit me that there was, as yet, nothing recorded about the HOs. These were the men who were recruited into the RAN late 1941 through 1945, and who struggled to come to grips with the knowledge explosion of complex electronic circuitry surrounding the various radar equipment types variously known as 281 and 960 Air Warning, Sugar George and 293 Navigation, 282 and 285 Gunnery Control, and others.

As well, there were other devices such as LORAN, a long range radio (not radar) navigation system, IFF or Identification Friend and Foe, Type X a cryptographic machine, High Frequency and Very High Frequency Direction Finding (HF & VHF DF), and the Radio Compass. To add to this seemingly never ending list of equipment to be studied and understood, there was also the range of W/T, Wireless Telegraphy transmitters and receivers for radio morse and voice communication.

The surviving members of this group of war time technicians are, in the year 2005, mostly over 80 years of age. The oldest at the time of writing this preface is 93. It is inevitable that their remaining time with us is short. Therefore now is the time to capture some of the personal history of these men, hence, this history of the RAN's World War 2 Radio Mechanics.

Despite all the considerable research which has been done to create this HO history, it is inevitable that there will be omissions and errors. One reason is that if all the available material had been included, this history would have run to volumes – an impractical outcome. Another reason is that digging into human memories that are 60 years old is a not entirely accurate process. This has been illustrated many

times over in the arguments about class numbers, and for this reason class numbers have been omitted from the master list of names as being quite unreliable.

Further to this, researching into official documents names by which individuals were known, has proved frequently to be misleading. Here are a few examples. “Clarrie” Dietmann (Clarence Charles), “Otto” Kruger (Alan Rex), “Tony” Dinham (Charles Anthony), “Phil” Thomas (Wesley Phillips), “Bill” Boswell (Robert William), Stan Powell was in fact Ernest Stanley Powell, not Stanley Alfred Powell, this latter being a Joiner III.

Nevertheless, I feel that what follows in this recorded history is for the most part true and as accurate as I could achieve.

George Stevens  
Berowra Heights, June 2005.

## Introduction

In September 1939, Australia followed Britain and declared war on Germany. At that time, the impending hostilities were half a world away, and posed little threat to Australia. In December 1941 when the Japanese launched their assaults on nations bordering the Pacific Ocean, matters changed dramatically. Instead of being an aggressor in a conflict 12,000 miles away, Australians were faced with the task of defending their domain from attack by a powerful, fiercely aggressive, determined and very close invader.



*John Gloury when Instructor Lt Commander. John Gloury, "Father" of the RAN Radio Mechanics personally interviewed and selected many of the RM trainees, and monitored their progress. He was a much respected man.*

The challenge to 12,000,000 Australians of defending their vast land area encompassed by about 4,000 miles of coast line, equipped with meagre and largely outdated defence technology was daunting. To meet the challenge, many initiatives such as accelerated recruitment into the three armed services and mobilisation of industry to support a war effort were implemented. In the total context of this scenario, one of the many initiatives was the creation of a

new branch of the Royal Australian Navy, the Wireless Mechanic branch.

Traditionally and for organisational purposes, the Navy had branches of Engineering, Gunnery, Navigation, Communications, Supply, Electrical and Medical. Within the Communications branch there were the visual signallers, colloquially called the "bunting tossers", and the Teleraphists, aka "sparkers". The Telegraphist's main role was to operate the wireless telegraphy equipment communicating by Morse Code. Their subsidiary role was to maintain the equipment, which in the immediate pre war days, was fairly simple.

In the early 1940s, the Telegraphists quickly found that the demands on their time and skills to handle the substantial increase in wireless traffic, as well as to man and to implement a training program to meet the needs of the sudden big increase in recruits was becoming more difficult as each month passed. Coupled with this, there was a steadily increasing introduction of more technologically complex electronic equipment to the ships and shore establishments. It soon became clear that the maintenance role of the Telegraphist could not continue. To address this need, the new title of Wireless Mechanic was conceived late in 1941, and introduced to the RAN early in 1942 (CNO194/42 refers).

In order to turn this concept into reality, selected personnel were to be given a basic training course of 6 months duration at the Melbourne Technical College, later known as the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). This basic training was followed by equipment training at the RAN shore establishments of HMAS Rushcutter and HMAS Watson in Sydney, and at HMAS Harman and the Belconnen Transmitting station, both in Canberra. A few of the selected personnel came from existing Naval ranks, but the majority were recruited from civilian life. These then became what we know today as the Hostilities Only Radio Mechanics (HO RMs).

Radio Direction Finding (RDF) was the name given initially to the very new and top secret device which could "see" targets over the

horizon, and at night, by showing on special equipment the range in yards, and bearing relative to the ship's head or to the compass. As well, for detecting aircraft, it could show the angle of elevation necessary for training the anti aircraft guns. Various models of this technology were developed, and it logically fell to the Wireless Mechanic to instal and to maintain it. The title RDF was soon changed to that of RADAR, an acronym of Radio Direction and Ranging. As the title Wireless Mechanic was then no longer completely descriptive, the maintainers' title was changed to Radio Mechanic. The Radio Mechanic then became responsible for the satisfactory performance of all electronic equipment in his ship. This was quite a responsible task. This change occurred in 1943 (CNO 414/43 refers).

In a history such as this, technical references are essential. However, the thrust and focus of the book is on the people. It is a record of what life was like for those men, most of whom, upon joining the RAN, had not the faintest idea of what the word Radar meant, nor how radio communication occurred, yet within the space of 12 months intensive training, had the responsibility of keeping all of a warship's radar and communication equipment fully functional.

Typically, the recruits were in their early 20s, and had secondary school education to year 5 level. Good passes in mathematics and physics were preferred. There were exceptions such as an older recruit with a strong background in radio.

Following the mandatory medical examinations and probity checks, the new recruits spent their first six weeks in the Navy "square bashing" at HMAS Cerberus. Cerberus is a large Naval training establishment at Crib Point Victoria. Those six weeks instilled a sense of discipline in each recruit, and taught him some of the basics of Navy life. The recruit learnt how to wear and to look after his uniform correctly, how to carry out the various drill orders, and generally to understand the subtleties of Naval routine. The facetious homily of "If it moves, salute it; if it is stationary then polish it; but if it wont take polish, then paint it" was not too far from reality.

All RAN recruits had this initial indoctrination which was then followed by specialist training at the various schools within Cerberus. For example, the Telegraphists went to the Signal School, the Stokers went to the Engineering School and so on. However, the Radio Mechanics were drafted to HMAS Lonsdale, a shore establishment located at Port Melbourne. Lonsdale became their home for the next six months in that this is where they slept, washed and ironed their uniform clothes and ate most of their meals. Each Monday to Friday, having had breakfast, they would travel to the Melbourne Technical College, later Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) for instruction in electictiy, and in radio transmission and reception. The travel distance was not far, perhaps 7 kilometres, and for the earlier classes was on the back of an open tray 3 ton truck. Passenger comfort and safety were given low priority. Some later classes had the luxury of travelling by tram.

Not all RMs were billeted at Lonsdale. There were occasions when the population exceeded the capacity for accommodation. On such occasions, some RMs were billeted out in private residences, such as their own home if they lived in Melbourne prior to enlistment.

What happened subsequent to the basic training depended upon two factors. One was the instructors' assessment of each student's potential, and the other was the manpower needs. Most graduates were very keen to be given the training which would lead them to a sea going ship. However, there were a number of shore based manning requirements such as the Naval Transmitting Station at Belconnen Canberra, HMAS Melville in Darwin, HMAS Magnetic in Townsville. So quite a few RMs missed the glamor and excitement of being front line to the enemy. A common war time expression of the day could be appropriate in these circumstances, that of "They also serve who only stand and wait".

The cameos which follow in this history are not all of those who faced the aggressor. They include some of the less glamorous appointments. Collectively they illustrate the RAN Radio Mechanic's significant contribution

to Australia's outstanding war effort. We can be proud equally of the front liners, and they who stood and waited.



# Chapter 1 - Cameos

## Introduction

With approximately 360\* HO RMs recruited during the war years, it would be quite impractical to include stories of all. To give a feel for service life across the whole of the Radio Mechanic Branch, 20 Cameos have been selected as being representative of all. A Cameo is a one or more page story of an RM's service life, written by, or edited by, the individual.

To minimise repetition, following is a brief account of the time spent during their first 6 months in the service.

Other than the Bailey Boys (see Chapter 3) and those transferred from other ranks within the service, most were recruited in the age range 18 to 20. There were a few older ones. As well most had secondary school education to the Leaving Certificate level (5<sup>th</sup> year high school), with good passes in mathematics and physics. Here again there were a few exceptions.

The basic training was a course of six months duration, conducted at the Melbourne Technical College (MTC), later named the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (R.M.I.T.). During this training period, some of the trainees were billeted at HMAS Lonsdale, a shore establishment which in recent years has been demolished. Others, particularly those with homes in Melbourne were billeted out. The Lonsdale barracks were located in Port Melbourne, between Beach & Rouse Streets, and Esplanade West.

Nearby Bay Street has had for many years a tram service direct to the city, but few RMs had the luxury of tram travel. Much of the time, transport from Lonsdale to the MTC was on the back of an open tray 3 ton truck to the College, located on the corner of Swanston and Latrobe Streets in Melbourne. Distance between Lonsdale and class room was a mere 3 miles (about 5 Km), so travel by truck was quick, which was fortunate on those days when the temperature hovered around 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees C), and when the rain was steady. (See photographs)

Some of the following cameos have been mildly edited where necessary for clarity of the message to be conveyed, but for the most, each is a verbatim account, written in the particular style of each contributor, with few changes to syntax, layout and punctuation. This is considered by the author to be essential, as it is the personality of the writer, revealed in part by his written style, that will mean as much to his family as the facts of his recording.

\* As well as the 343 who were trained at the Melbourne Technical College, there were some who transferred from other R.A.N. categories such as Wireman, and some who because of their prior experience in other occupations did not require the same level of basic training.

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## Cameos Names List

Baird	John Douglas	John	26691
Baldock	Brian Albert	Brian	27045
Balme	Basil Eric	Basil	26502
Crow	George Frederick	Jim	26942
Doran	Reginald Richard H.	Reg	27368
Gillespie	Peter Alexander	Peter	27092
Glover	Peter	Peter	27002
Gulson	Thomas Neil	Tom	27127
Kennedy	Kevin Michael	Kevin	26504
Labone	Reginald	Reg	(Note 1)
Linton	Robert Harriman	Bob	F4150
McDonald	Reuben Varney	Reuben	S/V150
McDonnell	James Mathew	Jim	26152
Pritchard	Maurice Francis	Maurie	PM7860
Ramsay	Hilton	Tony	27131
Routh	Russell	Russ	26985
Saunders	Norman Leslie	Norm	26085
Scaife	Clyde Arthur G	Clyde	26819
West	James Ernest H	Jim	26461
Woodward	Gregory Allan	Greg	26602

Note 1. Reg Labone did not join the RAN until January 1949, but his war time adventures in the RN made such interesting reading that he has been included with the RAN HOs.

## John Douglas Baird

John Baird joined the RAN Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman, (O/D), on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1942. He was given the official number of S7587. The 'S' prefix was for Sydney, his home town at the date of enlistment. The next day he was in HMAS Cerberus at Crib Point Victoria where he underwent Recruit training, colloquially known as 'square bashing'. Then from 18 December 1942 through 4<sup>th</sup> July 1943 he was based at HMAS Lonsdale, Port Melbourne. During this almost 7 months period, he was trained, with others, in wireless theory and practice at the Melbourne Technical College, later RMIT, situated at the top end of Swanston Street Melbourne city. After a further 2 weeks training in Naval W/T equipment at HMAS Cerberus, John was promoted to Wireless Mechanic on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1943, and posted to HMAS Rushcutter, at Rushcutters Bay Sydney, for further training at the South Head station, later to be named HMAS Watson. It was at this point that John became part of the permanent Naval forces for "a period of 2 years, or the duration of the war plus 6 months, whichever became the greater". He was given the permanent RAN official number of 26691.

John tells some of his story as follows. I, with others such as Ernie Morrison (later Captain Morrison) was in class 213 at the Melbourne Technical College (MTC). This was the first all Navy class, as previously there had been composite RAAF-RAN students. Accommodation at HMAS Lonsdale being at a premium, we Wireless Mechanic trainees lived out on "Lodge & Comp". This was cash in hand each week, additional to regular pay, to cover the costs of lodgings and meals not provided in HMAS Lonsdale. Each day, we would report to the MTC classroom in Lonsdale Street Melbourne for lectures and workshops, after which we would be transported to HMAS Lonsdale at Port Melbourne. Here we would go to the gymnasium for physical training (PT).

Following gymnasium there was the traditional Navy 'supper'. After supper, the class was required to do further study. We studied under the helpful eye of Lt. Guest who had come up through the ranks as a Telegraphist. He did his

best with a bunch of exuberant 'Jack-Me-Hearties' until we were free to go at 2100 hours. After some 6 or 7 months of this we returned to Flinders Naval Depot to spend a few weeks on the Naval transmitters and receivers, as Melbourne Tech had only Air force, Marine and commercial equipment on which we had trained. Some of our class then went to Belconnen in the ACT, whilst others, including me, came to Sydney (HMAS Watson) at Watson's Bay to meet at first hand our first Radar gear. We were there for a couple of months before being posted to Corvettes in the main.

I went to HMAS Bundaberg then refitting at Garden Island (GI). Somewhere in that period we 'broke strike' when dockyard workers (fiddlers and diddlers as they were known by Naval personnel) refused to work on HMAS Shropshire, recently arrived as a gift from the RN to replace Canberra.

After some months in Bundaberg – convoys between Townsville, Cairns and Milne Bay, I joined Base Staff, Cairns, where HMAS Platypus was the hub of the newly formed Depot. She was the last of the coal burners in the RAN. Later, when everyone expected her to leave her bottom in the mud in Cairns harbour, she steamed out with colours flying in the wind, the band playing, and her prestige intact. Later I went to the Evans Deakin dockyard at Kangaroo Point Brisbane where we serviced both RAN & RN vessels up and down the river as well as those in the dry dock at South Brisbane. When I visited Brisbane in 1988 it was a pleasure in a nostalgic way to see the old dock preserved as part of the 'Expo' site, with HMAS Diamantina cradled in her 'bosom'.

I saw out my last months of service in HMAS Glenelg doing minesweeping tasks off Sydney's northern beaches, and Hawkesbury River mouth (Broken Bay). It was part of the routine to go ashore some nights at Patonga. The piece of paper I'd been looking for finally arrived, and I became ex-RAN.

---

## Brian Baldock



My first attempt at joining up commenced in early 1942 when I applied to join the R.A.A.F and was accepted for Air Crew. I was placed on the Air Crew reserve as the Air Training facility in Canada was not completed. By October I got tired of waiting and joined the R.A.N. at Fremantle as an O.D. seaman. My official number was F4608. After training at Cerberus offers were made to join a special course (officially known as R.D.F.- Radar was a hush word) I applied and was sent to South Head to do an operator's course.

In May 1945 I was drafted to the corvette “Katoomba” in Fremantle and proceeded to Darwin as our base. From there we did several escort runs to Morotai and New Guinea and when the Japs surrendered we were ordered to Koepang in Timor to supervise the surrender ceremony there.

We're babies from Perth and Bangalore,  
and from Tash to The Shores  
Tollie and further—well, you see we can!  
We're Five and Twenty R.A.N.

Then, here's to the appos we're leaving.  
To our wingers and coopers and tubes—  
Though we share your sadness grieving,  
We're glad to be out of the tubes.

When the shore leads into the cinema,  
We're glad to see you and can't hear  
We'll turn them again to old kioskhouse tea,  
And wish—oh, how, we were there.

We'll soon be in the wireless war,  
Living up to Top's dear  
For we're true and blue, every one  
So still have 25 R.A.N.

AUTOGRAPHS

Carl E. Cohen  
H. Volpert  
E. Ringler  
R. J. H. H. H.  
J. E. Stevens  
David, H. H. H.

25 R.A.N.  
Radio Mechanics'  
Passing-Out Dinner  
DECEMBER, 1943

WE	
Andy Anderson	Pedals Opponent
Beth Baldock	Whisper Polack
Curly Bull	Baby Face Ramsay
Johnny Carney	Red-Gas Rugless
Sticky Davis	Tears Stephens
Duke Fannon	Ocker Stevens
Woolie Hollywood	Tiddly Luster
Seaman House	Doe Wileh
Wings McIntraham	Peel Vary
Macca Marden (Der Feikent)	Sea-gone Young
Blower L. Jacks Noodle	

Fast and Present Members of the Degeneration Class  
(not requiring feedback)

request that  
M. J. Rany.  
be our guest at

A Passing-Out Dinner  
to be held at

THE HOTEL FEDERAL, Melbourne  
Link Coupled with Station "T.V."  
on Thursday, 16th December, 1943  
at 10 a.m.

[MENU](#)

SOUP—exotic collations

**COUNTRY**—Russia. Duck with Bean Tetrode.

SWEETS—Tech. Mike Duffer Amplifiers

Tea and Coffee (Masked Stimuli: Neutralizers)

Grid Stoppers and Cathode Ray Aspros on hand  
if required

In August 1943 Commissioned Schoolmaster John Gloury visited the base and called for volunteers to do a Radar Mechanics course. I applied and was accepted. Technical training was carried out at the Melbourne Technical College (Class 25) and finally practical work at the Radar Station South Head Sydney on 284 and 271 sets.

base for minesweeping in Bass Strait. At this stage my discharge papers came through and I returned to Fremantle and was demobilised with the rank of Petty Officer on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1946.

I did not pursue any of the electronics training I had received whilst in the Navy as I had both Accountancy and Secretarial degrees and joined a large commercial company as Company Secretary, eventually becoming Managing Director and retired in 1981. I joined the Corvettes Association (W.A.), the Katoomba Association and R.A.N. Radio Mechanics Association of W.A. and maintain a keen interest in their affairs.

4



*Melbourne Technical College 4 RAN Class 1942. Standing L to R: Leslie John Traeger, Robert (Bob/Snow/Junior) Harriman Linton, Kenneth (Ken) Joseph Westcott, Stanley (Stan) Endersbee Clark, Harry Lance (Bill) Pennington, Alfred Colin (Col) Estwick, Kenneth (Ken) Matthew John Tiller. Squatting L to R: Russell (Russ) George Corben, James (Jim) Ernest Henry West. Question: Who took the photograph?*

## B.E.Balme

### Service 1942-1945

1 In about May 1942 called up as an Ordinary Seaman RANR. I have lost the records of my early service (i.e. May '42-April '43). My main reasons for joining the Navy were as follows:

- a. I had just begun the second year of an Engineering degree at UWA and found that I had little interest in purely Engineering subjects.
- b. At the time it seemed likely that the Japanese would soon land in Australia and we would all find ourselves in the Army anyway.
- c. I was also an RAAF reserve but the Navy called called me up first.
- d. Also as a small kid I was fascinated by ships and spent a lot of time wandering round the Fremantle docks.

2. Like most inductees my training began at Flinders (HMAS Cerberus) which in the Melbourne winter was a bleak concentration camp and it was a mighty relief when the Navy found out that I had passed some University physics and ordered me to train as a Radio Mechanic. Basic courses were given at Melbourne Technical School (now a university RMIT) and were pretty intensive. I think Kevin

Kennedy, Bert Hanson, Peter Weedon, Doc. Hunt and I made up Class 10. All of us had some knowledge of electrical theory of course but understood nothing at all about radio. Peter Weedon didn't survive the course and was shortly invalided out of the RAN with a serious affliction of his back. I relied pretty much on my previous knowledge of physics and as a result managed to scrape through the exams in a non-spectacular way. Lieut Gloury, the O-C training, was a strict disciplinarian who didn't treat non-achievers kindly. Fortunately he was also a cricket addict and as I was a reasonable medium-paced bowler he tolerated me.

During initial training we were stationed at HMAS Lonsdale, the shore station at Port Melbourne. There was no sleeping accommodation to speak of so we spent nights in various doss houses in town. A few of us discovered that we could stay at the U.S. Services canteen (from memory in Russell St), which had cheap American cigarettes and junk food and more comfortable beds than other service hostels available to the lower deck. A contemporary at the canteen was the GI serial killer Leonsky who was subsequently hanged in Pentridge for murdering several young women.

3. Graduating from Melbourne we encountered our first RDF sets at HMAS Watson on South Head. These were ultra hush-hush at the time and we weren't allowed to suggest what we were doing to outsiders. We were first trained on the 286, a fairly primitive low frequency aerial warning instrument which told you there were aircraft near but only gave a very broad idea of where they were. We then moved to the 276 (I think that was the title) which was, for the time, a very sophisticated high frequency (300 Khz again from memory), surface warning set, using the recently developed cavity magnetron as an oscillator, which was so secret that it could only be transported by armed guards. To-day of course it supplies the basic energy of microwave ovens. During this time I was introduced to classical orchestral concerts in Sydney Town Hall by my friend Colin Stewart, a Queenslander who remained in the RAN after the war.

4. On October 1943 I completed basic training and was transferred to RAN (HO) as Acting Leading Wireless Mechanic no. 26502. The next day I was drafted to HMAS Cowra which was commissioning at Cockatoo Dockyard. To some extent I supervised the installation of the two RDF sets mentioned above and shortly afterwards we began sea trials. My first discovery was that I was susceptible to violent sea-sickness. This was chronic for 6 months and then suddenly disappeared, so that I have never been sea sick again.

Cowra was a corvette mine-sweeper and during my time in her was based in Brisbane and served as a convoy escort between that port and northern islands, mainly New Guinea. Our captain, a great guy, was Lieut-Commander Gillies RANR, a long-serving ex-merchant marine officer, but otherwise the upper deck consisted of RANVR lieutenants with not much sea experience. Initially the radar was regarded by them (and the telegraphists) with suspicion, until it became clear that the 276 surface warning provided a fool-proof way of maintaining convoy stations. As the person who kept it running I was therefore indispensable and treated cautiously by all the watch-keepers. I enjoyed the Cowra. We had a mixed crew of permanent RAN specialists, and RANR ratings from a wide range of civilian backgrounds. As well there was an excellent library presented by the Maritime Workers Union and which was, as you would expect, heavy on authors who at the time were on the Communist Party approved list. As a result I read all of Dickens.

Convoy duty through the Barrier Reef was always a delight and by this time the Japanese air force had been virtually annihilated and the allies were in control of the Pacific Ocean. We were never really threatened by enemy action although from time to time we threw depth charges around in response to ASDIC echoes from probable fish shoals, and survived a couple of nasty typhoons, in one of which we rescued the crew of a foundered Fairmile.

On April 22nd '44 I achieved automatic promotion to Acting Temporary P.O. Wireless Mechanic a category that was upgraded to the grander title of Acting Temporary Radio

Mechanic in June of the same year. At the end of the same month Cowra took part in the

landing at Madang, transporting troops inshore and on one occasion a few Japanese POWs back, I think, to Townsville. They were housed in some misery on the foredeck, but I guess the weather was generally warm.

5. I wanted to stay on Cowra but in August '44 was redrafted to HMAS Watson for a refresher course. I can't remember in what ways we were refreshed but the August ('44) to April 1945 was a very pleasant interlude in wartime Sydney with a number of old and new friends. They included Bill Johnson, Bill Pennington, Keith Fraser and Ken Tiller. Again as there was no accommodation at Watson this group and I were billeted at an interesting large heritage style mansion in Double Bay owned by Mrs. Hills, a charming old widow who I gather had come down in the world a bit. Apart from us there were a motley group of other tenants. Among them was Mrs. Hill's son, a deserter from the Army, who ran a profitable taxi service carrying GI's from King's Cross to the City for about \$80 (US), and the wife of an Australian Army officer who was often in other States. She survived his absences by entertaining US servicemen in a downstairs bedroom. One evening the husband returned unexpectedly and her invitee of the evening vaulted the north garden wall not realising that it ran along a cliff top on the street side. He fell about 5 metres to the street below, surviving but with a couple of nasty fractures.

6. My last RAN year was spent on HMAS Bungaree, a converted merchantman originally fitted out as a minelayer. I am not sure whether she ever laid any mines but in my time was a supply ship operated between Sydney and Allied bases in the northern islands, mainly the Admiralties, Celebes and north-east New Guinea. By this time of course the Japanese threat south of the Philippines was non-existent and we were not on convoy so radar was of little interest to the navigators. I don't think we even kept radar watches, so filled in time with a lot of illegal poker and blackjack.

One of the particular supplies that we handled was a contraband trade in whisky and American



cigarettes. This was managed by our Bosun's Mate, an ex-Sydney policeman with enough underworld contacts to provide him with cases of normally unavailable whisky. These were sold to Americans in the north and the proceeds partly used to stock up on US cigarettes, which were of course virtually free in the American PXs, and he reaped a small fortune on the Sydney black market. After I left the ship he was demoted for attempting to steal a quantity of gold bullion being transported by Bungaree to Indonesia for the Dutch Government. Many years later I read in a paper that he had received a life sentence in California for drug smuggling. This was a member of a ring run by the then NSW Police Commissioner whose name escapes me although I seem to remember that he was olympic rower.

We were at sea for both VE and VP days so missed the celebrations in Sydney but the mainbrace was spliced on 14th August '45 to commemorate the Japanese surrender and subsequently we got a weekly beer ration of, I think, 2 bottles.

The last trip I remember on Bungaree was to Rabaul in order to participate in the Japanese surrender. This was a fascinating experience as Rabaul was an important Japanese base that was still substantially intact, with a Korean armoured brigade, many Indian prisoners of war and very large stores of electronic and other technical equipment in lava caves. I remember being especially impressed with the quality and sophistication of the Japanese radio communication instruments, because they contradicted the crucial Australian pre-war myth that the Japanese had no capacity for producing anything original. I remember also a conversation with a Japanese naval officer who was about my own age spoke good English and expressed his relief that the war was over and that he would be shortly going home, exactly my own view at the time

7. I left Bungaree on 12th February '46 and was demobilised a month later at HMAS Leeuwin in time to return to UWA for the 1946 year. I abandoned Engineering and enrolled in a Science degree eventually majoring in Geology. I did study some additional physics

and was about the only member of the class who was a master of the CRO, otherwise I have not subsequently used my naval radar training in any important way.



*10 RAN Class Melbourne Technical College 1942. L to R: Bert Hanson, Alan Hunt, Basil Balme, Peter Weedon, Kevin Kennedy. Photo taken by Col Stewart.*

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## Russell Corben

Personal memories of WWII by Russell George Corben, born in Sydney 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1921.

1940 & 1941: These were years with the growing threat from the Japanese of invasion of our homeland. It was a disturbing time to be studying Civil Engineering at Sydney University. Some of us joined the Sydney University Regiment and gained some skills in foot soldiering with use of rifle bayonet and light machine guns. We knew the wilds of the Blue Mountains rather well and thought we could offer some resistance to an invading force. In the second half of 1941 the RAAF came to the university seeking recruits who had second year studies completed in Maths and Physics, recruits to be trained as radar officers. I found release from Reserve Occupation was not available. A month or so later the RAN contacted me saying they needed the same sort of people for the same purpose and would be able to get release from the Reserved Occupation.

So, I left the university and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1942 at HMAS Rushcutter was kitted out with the round rig of an Ordinary Seaman – somewhat to my mother's disquiet but she was soon pleased to

be wearing a RAN brooch at the Anzac Canteen in Hyde Park.

Twenty one young men , aged mostly 19 and 20 reported to the Physics Building in the grounds of the University of Sydney, no doubt feeling somewhat uncomfortable in sailor's uniform as I did. We came from training for careers such as science, teaching, and engineering. My chosen career was to be engineering.

Before the age of ten I had been introduced to Sydney's water supply works construction by my father. Most memorable was a visit to dad's shaft, I think in the Summer Hill area, which was part of the construction work of the Pressure Tunnel for the supply of water to the city of Sydney. My dad, Leo Corben, spent his whole working life with the Sydney Water Board as a Surveyor and Civil Engineer.

We constituted the Number 2 Course of the Bailey Boys, the Number 1 course preceding ours had been for the RAAF. The duration of the course was six months with the first three months devoted to rigorous mathematical analysis and was possibly more suited to the training of research and development scientists than practical application in the Navy at that particular time. It is recorded that 14 graduated. After three months, five of us were given the option of discharge or transfer to the radio mechanics' course running at Melbourne Technical College. Three of us accepted the radio mechanics' option. We were R.G. (Russ) Corben, A.C. (Col) Estwick, K.M.J. (Ken) Tiller. We arrived at Cerberus, Flinder's Naval Depot, on a freezing mid winter's night. We were getting used to the loud voiced challenge of "Who are you ?" We were three "mature" aged Ordinary Seaman who obviously did not know naval protocol very well and were therefore highly suspect. We were finally told to go to a certain dormitory block well and truly out of sight in the windy distance and sling our hammocks and see what the morning brought. This is what we did.

There were physical exercises at dawn on the parade ground. The rain water in the puddles was frozen solid and our dress was shorts and singlets.

There was marching drill, gymnasium sessions and drill, and a host of things that go to make a good sailor. After three weeks, the three of us were drafted to Lonsdale to join the Radio Mechanics Course probably Number 4.

### **Threat of invasion :**

1941 – The Japanese Empire occupied allop of the north western Pacific, including the Philippines, Borneo, Malaysia, Singapore, the Indonesian Archipelago, including Timor and most of Papua and New Guinea.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1941 Pearl Harbour was bombed, severely damaging the U.S. Pacific fleet. On the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1942, just nine weeks later, Darwin was bombed with heavy loss of shipping.

### **Radar in Britain :**

Coastal radar provided vital assistance in fighting off the massed bombing raids which were to be the prelude to the invasion of Britain by Germany.

A most significant event took place in September 1940 when the British literally carried a cavity magnetron and 10 cm circuitry to the U.S.A. as a result of an agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt. These secrets were the result of British research and development, and the involvement of the U.S.A. allowed mass production to begin.

### **Radio Mechanics' Training**

15<sup>th</sup> July 1942 – 1<sup>st</sup> March 1943 : This period of 7 ½ months was spent at HMAS Lonsdale. This naval depot is at Port Melbourne. We slept in hammocks and had meals at the depot, plus evening tutorials and exercises in the gymnasium. Each weekday, an open truck provided transport to and from the Melbourne Tech College warehouse. It was a makeshift classroom with a pendant light hanging in front of a blackboard. We were given thorough grounding in basic electrics and radio theory.

### **Recreation:**

There was leave at some weekends. I think we were occupied on most Saturday mornings. Generally Col Estwick and I took our leave together. Ken Tiller was more of a loner.

The study material was very much in contrast to the Bailey course that we had left. It was directed to an understanding of basic equipment and its use and maintenance. After this course we were drafted back to Cerberus for a further three weeks of basic training for new sailors. The date was 1<sup>st</sup> March 1943.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1943, I was transferred from RAN V.R., my identity number was S/V114, to the RAN (H.O.), for Hostilities Only, with new identification number of 62463.

On 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1943, my rating was changed from Ordinary Seaman, shown as O/D to W/M (Wireless Mechanic). On the following day, the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1943, I was transferred to HMAS Kuttabal with my rating raised to Acting Leading Wireless Mechanic. My papers show that three weeks were spent at Kuttabal but I have no recollection of that time.

18<sup>th</sup> April 1943 I was drafted to HMAS Rushcutter. This was the beginning of six months study period of real radar equipment at South Head, a naval establishment later to be named HMAS Watson. There was no barracks accommodation at the radar school, so we were all billeted out. Those from interstate found flats, some at Double Bay, and I was able to live at home in the Eastern suburbs. This period of living at home enabled some forced-draught wooing and securing of the girl of my choice.

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 1943, Joan Fitzpatrick and I were wed at the Anglican Church at Bellevue Hill. Among the guests were a party of sailors from the RAN radar school. There were six or seven of them, namely Col Estwick, Ken Tiller, Stan Clarke, Jim West, Bill Pennington, Bob Linton, Bill Johnson. We had a few days honeymoon at a loaned holiday cottage in the southern highlands and believe it or not Joan had a pot of stew together with her luggage. She has been a good provider of food ever since. A friend and her mother kindly vacated their flat at Double Bay for our occupation during the balance of the course at

South Head. Married life did not interfere unduly with the exciting experience of learning about the many types of radar equipment. My recollection of one piece of equipment is still quite vivid. This was a lattice type dish antenna mounted in really heavy duty gimbals, supported by two heavy steel plate pedestals, which in turn were mounted on a traversing base. It was automatically stabilized to hold a steady direction at sea. Our class's effort with this antenna must have been without an instructor because we finished up with the dish lying on its back and rocking like a baby's cradle. A lesson was learnt. The gyroscope must be allowed to come up to full speed before it is effective. I believe this set was possibly an English 276 and possibly the first firm step towards radar direction of naval gunnery.

Another lesson learnt that has stayed with me down the years is that when working with high voltages, reach with one hand on and either have the other hand behind your back or in your pocket. This reduces the risk of fatal electric shock. There is one light-hearted recollection. At the end of each working day secret documents, which probably included the technical manuals and circuit diagrams of the equipment at the school were secured in a safe or strong room. This was done by one of the working sailors under the eye of a sub lieutenant. The sailor was charged with farting in this enclosed space in the presence of an officer. I don't know how it was worded in the Charge Book.

At last after six months at South Head, I received a draft chit to a sea going ship lying alongside at Port Melbourne.

23<sup>rd</sup> October 1943 I joined HMAS Kapunda Corvette Number J218. She had been commissioned only 12 months previously and was built by Pool and Steel at Balmain Sydney with machinery by Walkers, Maryborough Queensland. The ship was very much in the hands of the dock yard people and she had only a skeleton crew aboard. I was received on board and taken below to the P.O.s' Mess where an empty locker was indicated and the corner bin pointed out for the stowage of my hammock. This was my new home. Mess mates for the next 13 months were to be Jack Madden, coxswain, Ron



Impy "Buffer", stoker Alf Woods, stoker Bill Bradbury, stoker Dave (?). Installation of the radar equipment was well advanced with cabling still in progress. The two radar sets, one for air warning, the other for surface warning, plus the control consoles and the two seats for operators completely filled the small cabin. This space had previously been the skipper's shower room. We were reminded of this later in the tropics when the skipper was seen on many occasion with a towel wrapped around his waist walking from his cabin along the open deck to the ward room for his shower.

The air warning radar set used the bedstead antenna with stacked di-pole with stacked di-poles fitted at the masthead. Surface warning was provided by a 10 cm set using an antenna concealed within a large plywood drum mounted above the bridge. Each operator controlled the direction of the antennae through a system of linked step by step motors. Reports to the bridge were via voice pipes and bearings were given relative to the ship's heading. The operators were six young seamen who worked the ship's normal watch keeping routine. The display units were a cathode ray tube with a single linear trace. The detected object produced an echo which showed as a blip on the luminous green trace on the screen. The position of the blip against a graduated scale gave the distance of the object from the ship.

The author Monsarrat wrote "that a corvette would roll on wet grass". The Kapunda was a corvette and was indeed very lively in big seas. My first experience was on leaving Port Phillip and entering Bass Strait where large swells were running. I didn't feel the best for a couple of days. My only consolation was there were quite a number of others who felt the same way. Another occasion was in the Coral Sea where we steamed north right through the centre of a cyclone. Strong wind from starboard gave way to relatively calm air but the seas were big and very confused, then we gradually left the centre and the wind built up to a gale again, this time from portside. One other occasion was also in the Coral Sea. We had a disabled vessel under tow and were traveling at about 3 knots for several days in very rough weather. We were heading for

a passage through the Great Barrier Reef that would lead to Cairns.

### **Kapunda recollections in random order:**

Swimming alongside with a calm sea, the sentry with rifle on the wing of the bridge, on one occasion the ocean was said to be very deep indeed. On another occasion a sea snake drifted down the length of the ship between the ship's side and the swimmers. All activity stopped while everybody stood as tall as they could in the water until the 'all clear' was given. Our water polo teams gained some practice on these occasions.

Still at sea, occasionally a friendly Catalina flying boat would visit and talk to us by Aldis lamp, maintaining radio silence. These visits gave us the opportunity to check the echo size on our air warning radar. Similarly our surface warning radar could be checked for performance when a 'Liberty' ship came into range. These ships were sighted frequently and of a known size, that is ten thousand tons. At Langemak Bay a shore party visited an abandoned army supply dump. Among the spoils were two machine guns, .5 calibre, which soon replaced our antiquated .303 Lewis guns on the afterdeck mountings. There was suitable ammunition of course.

At sea again, a floating mine was sighted and sunk with small arms fire. At Madang Harbour Aussie troops were still active mopping up after Japanese retreat. Low shore lines and coconut palms everywhere, most had had their tops shot off to minimize their use by snipers.

Solomon Sea – on extended patrol out of Milne Bay, radio signal received from Canberra (Harman?) advising that P.O.R.M. Corben became a father on the 13<sup>th</sup> May and that Joan and baby Helen were doing well.

It was probably also on this same patrol that we met up with U.S. navy supply ship "Merka". This was a notable event on a long patrol. Our crew was given access to the big ship's canteen where cigarettes and ice cream were purchased. Kapunda's "caterer" also took the opportunity to augment our depleted food stocks. Thereafter we had a supply of frozen chicken and fresh

vegetables. We probably took on furnace oil at the same time, so that we could get back to port again.

On a sadder note, were the five Japanese prisoners-of-war who were on board for two or three days and secured in our vegetable locker on the fore deck.

After the Solomon Sea, we spent the next three months patrolling the waters off the north coast of New Guinea, mostly between Langemak and Biak and Manus Is.

### **Acceptance on board of the ‘Wireless’ Mechanic :**

First with the Sparkers I made it clear that the ordinary radio equipment was none of my responsibility, that the word wireless was a disguise for the word radar.

On the bridge it was known that we could detect distant aircraft and shipping and, hopefully not too close, the periscope of a submarine. Additionally, when escorting a convoy at night we could report any of the vessels straying out of formation. Similarly, at night we could provide a navigational aid when the ship was passing through straits with a great smattering of small islands and rock outcrops. It might be mentioned there was no remote display of the radar screens on the bridge. The PPI (Plan Position Indicator) with remote display on the bridge was a development yet to come.

Acceptance with the Seamen was gained by, one, swimming over the side, whenever the opportunity presented itself, and trying out unsuccessfully for a place in one of the two water polo teams. Secondly, by climbing the mast at sea to do a job on the bedstead antenna which involved sitting on the very top of the mast with legs wrapped around the antenna trunk, the trunk which houses the rotating mechanism for the array. Thirdly, I joined a small select informal crew who were permitted to take the ship’s whaler on the bay outside Townsville where we sailed from the port out to Magnetic Island and back. Seaman Phil Stillwell was in charge.

With the Stokers, when invited to do my ‘dhobying’, in the boiler room using live steam. This was something special because the boiler room operates under forced draught and access is through an airlock with two doors, which must never be both open at the same time.

In the engine room when the Chief E.R.A. gave me permission to use his lathe to turn a brass blank up into a coupling that was required as a replacement.

### **A long range appreciation :**

In retrospect, it was realized that Kapunda was a very sea worthy little ship. She always managed to shake off the green water that poured over her decks, no matter how severe the weather. Furthermore there was complete confidence in the ship’s company. It was accepted that every man contributed to the safety of the ship and could be relied upon to do his job backed up by his “oppo”.

Many of us were part time sailors and a belief that Kapunda could be called a good ship was due very largely to the coxswain, Petty Officer Jack Madden. His long experience and strong calm authority were respected throughout the lower deck and on the bridge.

### **What are my feelings when I revisit my time in Kapunda between October ’43 and November ’44 ?**

I guess they are lingering feelings of pride and affection.

### **6<sup>th</sup> November 1944**

I left Kapunda at Sydney, my home port, and was greeted there by my wife Joan and a lively six month’s old daughter.

I was drafted to HMAS Rushcutter and spent four months there at the radar research laboratory working with Lieutenants Dave Medley and Alan Young, and Petty Officer radio mechanics George Cowie and Bob Snedden. This was a good time, living at home, learning to be a father, and struggling to recover some social graces.



At the laboratory, the test equipment was stuff of radio mechanics dreams. My principal task was the experimental development of the circuitry of a pulse generator. A “Cossor” double beam oscillograph was a constant companion on the test bench.

The last ten months of my naval service were at HMAS Watson where the urgency and intensity of instruction gradually diminished as the war got closer and closer to Japan and finally ceased.

11<sup>th</sup> February 1946 – I finally took a vocational discharge.

### **Post war :**

I used CRTS (Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme) to resume undergraduate studies at the University of Sydney, after a lapse of four years. I worked initially at the Qld irrigation and water supply commission. With further study I gained a local government engineer’s certificate for Qld, and shortly after gained a similar certificate to practice local government engineering in N.S.W. Looking back, virtually the whole of my working career has been devoted to providing engineering services for country people. It has been a satisfactory way in which to spend a working life.

### **Acknowledgements :**

Dates have been taken from my personal service record, and from the book titled, “H.M.Australian Ship Kapunda” by Mal (Doc) Williams.

Thirdly, the book titled “The Boffins of Botany Bay - Radar at the University of Sydney, 1939 – 1945”, edited by Roy McLeod.

Fourthly, all the rest is my memory recall after a lapse of sixty years and I can’t think of any reason to doubt it. Reflections of course are current.

**Kapunda’s radar** (This is additional and may be duplicated)

There are two radar sets, an air warning set model A186, and a surface warning set, model A272.

They were copies of U.K. equipment made in Sydney almost certainly hand built. The A272 made by AWA at Ashfield. There was no air conditioning on board and the equipment operated under the ambient conditions of the temperature and humidity with very little tropic-proofing. There was very little tropic-proofing of components. Equipment failure was rare and then mainly due to the formation of films between conducting surfaces in pressure contact, as with vacuum tube pins and socket, in rotary switches, cable plugs and sockets, commutator bars and rings. A very fine abrasive (crocus? paper) was used for repairs and for regular maintenance. Circuit diagrams and operating manuals were not available. If they were on board they would have been held in canvas bags with a heavy weight and I did not ever see them.

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### **George Frederick Crow**

I volunteered to join the Navy on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1941, and was mobilised 20<sup>th</sup> November 1941. I was sent to Flinders Naval Depot (FND), HMAS Cerberus, to be trained as an Ordinary Seaman.

Training at FND was completed 20<sup>th</sup> April 1942, at which date I was drafted to a converted coastal vessel HMAS Marrawah, all of 472 tons displacement. Our task was to mine sweep in Bass Strait, off Wilsons Promontory. I remained in Marrawah until 21<sup>st</sup> August 1942, at which date I was drafted to HMAS Hobart commencing 22 August 1942. During my sojourn in Hobart I applied to train as a Radio Mechanic. As my aim was to study Electrics originally, this opportunity could not be missed.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April 1943 I was transferred to HMAS Lonsdale to front a selection committee concerning my application to be selected and trained as a Radio Mechanic. Fortunately I was accepted, and commenced training at the Melbourne Technical College.

I was in class number 23. This later training ceased on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1944. On 13<sup>th</sup> January

I was transferred to HMAS Cerberus, and qualified as a Leading Radio Mechanic.



*23 RAN Class Melbourne Technical College 1943. Back row L to R: Cec Snyder (previously Znidersic), Reg Dawson, Jack McLean, Bill Drew. Middle row L to R: Jim Beveridge, Peter Wardrop, Alex McKenzie, Eric (Lofty) McKinna. Front row L to R: George (Jim) Crow, Ken Hayes, Jack Porter, Nev Rice.*

My next move was another transfer to South Head Sydney Radar School to be trained in Radar. On 20<sup>th</sup> June 1944 I was drafted to HMAS Adelaide, and lasted there until Adelaide was decommissioned on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1945. Radar sets on Adelaide were Surface Warning, Aircraft Warning and Gunnery.

From HMAS Adelaide I was transferred to the Radio Workshop at Leichhardt. Radar sets serviced were Surface Warning, and repairs and maintenance to Airforce portable sets run on a power supply of 12 volt batteries. Testing of valves was carried out on transmission valves A12s and AV12s, and magnetrons etc.

My time in the Navy ceased when I was demobilised on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1946. I resumed my previous occupation as a clerk after my demobilisation

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## **Reginald Richard Hugh Doran**

Alias Ord Sea II R. Doran F3783  
LRM R. Doran 27368

When war was declared I was in the cadets. I joined the Navy on the 10th March 1941 aged 17

years was mobilized 16 June 1941 and left for Flinders Naval Depot on 15th August 1941 as an Ordinary Seaman second class (OD II). My rate of pay was Two Shillings a day.

At the end of 1941 eight of us came back to Leeuwin and two days later went aboard a small passenger come freighter bound north supposedly for Surabaya the Dutch navy port in Java. We never did quite reach it, but we did meet up with HMAS Vendetta who at the time had been towed out of Singapore by a Malaysian river boat the Ping Wo. We took over the tow and some weeks later despite storms in the Great Australian Bight finally delivered her to Melbourne.

Whilst no doubt appreciative of the experience gained Lonsdale did not want us so put us on a train for Adelaide who also did not want us were unable to get us on a train to Perth. So sent us to Darwin.

I spent 18 months on the patrol boats i.e. Vigilant Kuru Larrakia and Chinampa covering many areas of the ocean north of Darwin including supply runs to the Japanese occupied islands of Timor and the Celebes.

The ships being too small to rate a telegraphist or signalman a group of us were given a 6 weeks course as VS and RTs, a stack of out of date books on radio (starting with crystal sets ) with lots of time to spare I became quite adept at radio technology and was recommended for Radio Mechanic if I ever got out of Darwin and its little Ships.

Sadly my father died in mid 1943 and I was drafted back to Fremantle where I did a course as a Radar Operator. 6 weeks later I was loaded aboard a troop ship to join the HMAS Nizam in Alexandria. For reasons never determined I never did reach the Nizam or Alexandria. I went ashore at Bombay and spent a week or so at the British Naval establishment at Malabar Hills where I was instructed in the operation and maintenance of the British 286 radar set and LRN navigation equipment. A short time later I was, together with these sets placed aboard the HMAS Launceston, a decision not entirely to the COs liking as it was his bathroom which became the radar cabin.

The next 9 months was spent on convoy duty from Aden to the Persian Gulf, Colombo, Trincomalee and Burma. In the course of time the sets and I became acceptable to both the crew and

the Skipper. The crew because Dawn Action Stations were eliminated and the Skipper because I agreed to coxswain the ship's motor boat

The Launceston returned to Fremantle in October 1944 and I left her there to go to South Head to do the Mechanics Course.

I was transferred to the permanent service (Hostilities Only) on the 11th July 1945 as a Leading Radio Mechanic and drafted to HMAS Deloraine on which I served until June 1946 when I returned to Fremantle for demobilization.

Following demob I was enrolled under the CRTS scheme to do an associate degree course in Engineering at the WA School of Mines in Kalgoorlie. The allowance was not great and I worked nights as transmission technician for radio station 6KG.

During the second year of the course I accepted the post of lecturer in Maths and Physics at the school and completed the Engineering course part time plus a physics degree to boot.

In 1952 was appointed design engineer with Western Mining Corporation and was the original engineer of Western Aluminum prior to its becoming ALCOA.

In 1962 I was appointed Chief Engineer of the Plaimar-Industrial Extracts Group. Awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1968 and whilst in Germany negotiated the rights to extrude polyethylene pipe in WA.

Was appointed the Chairman and Technical Director of the newly formed Gay-Dor Pastics Ltd., and continued in that position until the company was taken over in 1978 by James Hardie. The rest of my working life has been private practice as design engineer, Adviser/consultant with the Small Business Advisory Corporation, Chairman of the New Enterprise Training Scheme.

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## Peter Gillespie

### *Confessions of a reluctant radio mechanic*

I was working at Whyalla as a shift chemist in the Blast Furnace Laboratory when the BHP

approved my application for release in order to enlist. At that time my "war effort" was considerable! BHP and I were making pig iron to throw at our enemies, and ferro - manganese, an alloy used in steel making (made for the first time in Australia). I was also a member of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol and spent many hours learning semaphore and on patrol at night in a launch in the middle of Spencer Gulf. We were there to detect the presence of enemy raiders and mine-layers. The semaphore training was useless on these night patrols but we must have been effective for we encountered no enemy ships during my service. I can only think that they had been prewarned, and so, kept clear of our patrols.

At HMAS Torrens I was assessed and prepared for draft to FND. In order to facilitate a quick call-up I had been advised to apply for entry as a Stoker. However, at Torrens I was advised "We're full up on Stokers at the moment. Wanna' try for a telegraphist?" And so it was . I left Adelaide for FND by rail with a bunch of other young hopefuls eager to get into the fray.

### Training.

For the life of me ,I can't remember much about the training. I don't think that I liked telegraphy much and I probably wasn't very good at it. I liked our trips "up the line " to Melbourne and I was probably typical of the youth of the day, a bit of a lair, out for a good time, etc.etc. I soon bought myself a "tiddley" uniform with very wide bottoms and made of the finest material and pretty tight fitting. It didn't help with the training or the girls, I'm afraid! In the beginning I was kitted up properly with all the usual gear for an AB or round -rig sailor.

I had only one or two spells of sentry duty, fully fitted with rifle,tin hat and all and once again the enemies kept their distance. This is probably why I did not attain any "qualified service", just because the enemy didn't show when I was on duty!

At some stage I was offered a chance to become a Radio Mechanic.I'm not sure what attracted me - being stationed in Melbourne for a while, chance of promotion to PO after a short period, learning a new skill which might help in civilian

life. Anyway I was accepted, and I was drafted to Lonsdale for training at Melbourne Technical College.

### **Melbourne Tech.**

Although attached to HMAS Lonsdale I was billeted out and lived at St.Kilda with a Mrs. Ince as landlady. I fancy that I travelled to MTC by tram each morning although I must have had some contact with Lonsdale for things like pay and other allowances. I remember being transported through Melbourne on the back of a truck on certain occasions-once to see a film at Toorak called Dieppe -an account of the big withdrawal. We had civilian instructors mostly. One I remember {was his name Walker?} told us that we could earn big money by servicing civilian radios. One only had to open up the valve tester in front of the client and that was worth 7/6 for a start! That is the same as our "call-out" fee today of about \$45. !! Walker? never did know the time. Last watch he had he dropped in Lake Ontario!! He told us that!

Somehow I finished the course,utterly without distinction. I did manage to make a radio for my then girl friend.Somone made a nice cabinet for it. It wasn't a super-heterodyne or anything like that, something like a two valve oscillator or like that pretty simple.

I wasn't in the top echelon of graduates-they were all selected for radar training, while those in the bottom tier were relegated to shore duties, looking after big transmitters, ships' radios and general small communication equipment.

I'll have to leave it people like George Stevens (who I am to meet in another life) to remember all the technical names of the equipment and its function. I can easily recall some names like 6V6 (nobody ever mentions octal sockets. Why?) Any way, nobody would understand me at all these days if I prattled on about all the technical terms used in the old steam radio days.

I think that if I enlisted today in the high-tech world of transistors, computers, CD Roms, wireless PC cards etc., I would barely be accepted as a stoker. Perhaps a sailmaker!! Maybe I was posted to Belconnen in the ACT. I

remember spending some time there, climbing part way up the mast to replace globes, the big transmitters with massive (then) power. We were in repayment messes in small cottages on site where we looked after our own victualling.

Maybe all shore radio chaps were sent to Belconnen to wait until someone thought that they had a use for one of us.

I scored Darwin! I was sent on leave to Adelaide with orders to report to Rushcutter for transport to Darwin. No! They would not let me go direct (by plane) to Darwin. Back to Sydney and then by train to Townsville and Mt.Isa. I was with about seven other RAN chaps and we were set to work helping the army erect tents. All day; we were ---ed at the end of the day. In the morning we were surrounded by 600 RAAF personnel who moved in during the night and we didn't hear a thing!! The whole group set off for Darwin in big covered trucks.It took a couple of days as I remember. The organisation was an eye-opener to me in those days. There was a big staging camp where everyone was fed and slept with a minimum of fuss. The RAAF handled the messing, the army looked after the camp and we seven had some minimal duties, although one old PO objected to doing menial tasks when there were so many RAAF ground staff there!

On to Darwin, part of the trip in open railway wagons (from Katherine I think) It would cost you thousands of dollars now on the new Ghan!!

### **Darwin (HMAS Melville)**

What a perfect spot for a holiday [or a naval depot]. Beautiful weather, lovely beaches and tropical swimming holes. Sporting facilities were well organised. A lolly water factory provided a constant ration and access to US canteens was always available.

The work? We were there to service Australian ships with their small portable R/T units. This entailed mainly testing tuning, replacing defective parts on small units. I imagine that work on the big transmitters was carried out by personnel from Coonawarra. We operated from a small shed at the rear of the Hotel Darwin now operating as general HQ and Officers Unit. WO Val Clayton was our OIC



with a PO Tel Ponting as 2IC . We were housed in a private house right opposite an RC church with an air raid trench at the rear (only used by snakes, I think )

I can't remember making any outstanding contributions to the maintenance of the fleet, but I do remember being sent on a scavenging foray on foot to locate a piece of equipment needed for one of our ships .I found and "borrowed" the unit from a RAAF base down near Adelaide River. I didn't walk far - plenty of lifts.

After about twelve months I was drafted to FND for a LORAN course. I travelled to Brisbane by US air transport and was introduced to toona fish sandwiches and peanut butter and jelly[jam] sandwiches.

#### Loran

Loran (long range aid to navigation) was a nice piece of equipment newly introduced to Australia and we were assembled to learn how it worked and maintain the equipment on ships. The course was over about two weeks, as I remember. The unit was pretty simple to understand and very easy to work on. I did well on the course and was drafted to stay and instruct Navigation Officers on the operation of the units. I had strict instructions to keep adjusting screwdrivers well out of their hands!!!

This little exercise was most helpful in my being elevated to the dizzy heights of PORM! ! ! I would not have made it otherwise ,I'm sure.

I enjoyed my little stay at FND. I was able to entertain young English Nav. Officers in the PO's mess on threepenny nights. The poor blokes had a miserable time in the wardroom and they couldn't afford a beer at all. I ran one or two courses and was then drafted to Rushcutter to service Loran equipment on the ships coming into harbour.

#### HMAS Rushcutter

I was stationed on Garden Island for what was to be the rest of the war. We or I, was situated in the signal station at the top of the island with some very old CPO Signals (Chief Yeoman of Signals I think is his correct title) and an old leading tel.

My duties were to visit the ships in harbour and adjust their Loran units which the Nav Officers had put out of whack! Very pleasant it was too.! I "lived out" for a while with a fellow RM, Peter Price,at his home in Greenwich. We caught a ferry every morning and evening. What a job!!! Old Bertie Eagles the Yeoman gave us a radiogram. We picked it up from his luxury apartments at Darling Point. It was a lovely thing cedar cabinet with a phonograph on top. It didn't work! Peter and I dissembled it on the lounge room floor and after several brandies, put it back together and it worked beautifully. Peter's Dad (of very little faith) was absolutely stunned and so came to realise what an asset we were to the war effort!!

After a while I was required to "live in " at Potts Point and I found myself as duty PO for a bunch of new recruits and was required to march them to and from the island and to supervise their activities after hours.

#### Discharge

The enemy tossed in the towel and the Navy reluctantly let me go in January 47 I think.

While in Darwin I studied Xray work for something to do. On discharge I was employed by Watson Victor selling xray and electromedical equipment while dabbling in hospital work as an xray technician. I returned to Adelaide and secured a job with Defence Standards Laboratories as an industrial radiographer. After some years I landed a job with the Australian Atomic Energy Commission and stayed there for twenty or so years.

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### Peter Glover

RAN (HO) 27002 PETTY OFFICER RADAR MECHANIC PETER GLOVER'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SERVICE. (Mainly from memory)

During school days in 1942 it was always a question of which Service to join. I had passed the

entrance exam to Royal Australian College at Jervis Bay in 1938 but was disqualified after I suffered a broken leg and could not make the physical exam as fit. New Guinea mud ruled the army out and doubt as to qualifying as a Pilot all pointed to Navy. School finished December 1942 then weighing wheat for Co-operative Bulk Handling at Corrigin WA until January 1943. Thence by rail trolley to Spencer's Brook and train to Northam. My maternal Grandmother's house there was base as both parents were in the Army and we had no house of our own.

Northam to Perth by train to volunteer and have medical for RAN Service. Back to Northam by train to await call up.

25<sup>th</sup> February 1943 as not 18 years old until April sworn in at HMAS Leeuwin as Ordinary Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class rank. Issued with hammock, bedding but no uniform. Warned by duty Petty Officer to be careful if any three badge able seaman plied me with favours? Two days later boarded troop train bound for HMAS Cerberus

The steam train to Melbourne usually took 7 days. Navy lower deck personal usually travelled eight in a four berth compartment. The Army and RAAF travelled in cattle trucks with straw palliasses! Floods on Nullarbor Plain caused a delay at Army transit camp at Parkston Rail Junction of Western Australian narrow and Commonwealth standard gauge tracks. Lived in army style in tents surrounded by mud. Meals during train journey were served at water stops, cooked in mobile army kitchens carried on flat top wagons. Prepared food was transferred to ground and served into tin plate which together with knife, fork spoon and dixie had been issued to everyone before boarding train. Sleeping arrangement were draw for bunks,

luggage racks, floor and corridor last. Changed trains to South Australian broad gauge at Port Pirie. Navy were not controlled by army so were able to taxi to Brown's Hotel for a shower, steak and eggs then back to train which usually was at least an hour transferring goods. Adelaide in time to catch "Overland Express" overnight to Melbourne to arrive at Spencer's Street Station next morning, hand in mess gear and onto Flinders' Street to catch train to Crib Point arriving by mid afternoon. At last we were there, issued with rest of kit which was

mustered after marking with own name stamp, shown to our mess and met our Class Petty Officer. Initial Training in RANR started next morning with early morning PT. Senior Schoolmaster Lieutenant "Beau" Guest checked each one of us out for educational standard. No University Degrees. I was only one having passed Leaving Standard and most others had not passed Junior Standard.

As an Ordinary Seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class I was not allowed ashore for first leave because the required letter from my guarantor in Melbourne had not been received in time. (The letter did arrive in time for second leave.) However I did get to see Melbourne when all the rest went on first leave as class was included in a train load of Navy sent to march lunch time Friday down Collins Street with Army, RAAF and US Marines for the War Loan Rally. Everyone was out of step until the US Marine Band struck up "Hi there Mister You had better watch your Sister the Fleets in Town". Afterwards back to HMAS Cerberus with those on the duty watch.

During the three-week parade ground drill Lieutenant Guest interviewed me. As a result I was transferred to HMAS Lonsdale Port Melbourne on 19th April 1943 for entry into Class 21 of Radar Mechanics' Course at Melbourne Technical College after being raised to Ordinary Seaman on 10th April 1943.

During week's wait for school to commence one of several sent on temporary draft to HMAS Quiberon alongside wharf near Maribyrnong to sort fire damaged gear in Petty Officers' Mess. All crew were on leave having just returned from duty in Middle East. Ship was on auxiliary power dark and dirty and we had to find our own (rations) which was a new experience. I had to sleep aboard as not enough cash to go ashore until payday.

Back to muster at HMAS Lonsdale as one of Class 21. To Melbourne Technical College at top of Swanson Street near city Baths in an open truck. Issued with school needs and met Mr Hehir Radio Theory Teacher and Joe "Solder" Teacher of practical soldering (after we had first made our own small soldering iron filed from square section copper bar fitted with mild steel

rod to connect to it handle provided.) as well as other “hands on” practical work and the teller of “dirty” jokes.

Our main Lecturer Room was in partly constructed “Campbell’s Buildings”. Concrete floors, no windows fitted and not connected to electricity. Classroom furniture only consisted of tables and chairs plus blackboard. It was cold so we all soon had found a block of wood for under our feet plus a drum for a fire fuelled by wood from around the building.

Normal Naval day routine started at HMAS Lonsdale. To school in truck after 0800 muster for 0900 start. Lunchtime 1200 to 1300. One shilling a day lunch money extra pay added to Ordinary Seaman’s five or was it three shillings a day to cover this expense. Lunch usually required a tram to Collins Street and depending upon cash in hand a pie or sandwich with cup of tea for a shilling but if required to pay one penny tram fare each way exceeded daily allowance so at end of pay period resorted to mince on toast at Scots Church Canteen for six pence. We usually managed to dodge conductor when tram was crowded.

School for the afternoon was from 1300 to 1545, then to HMAS Lonsdale for afternoon tea before a Physical Training Session in the gymnasium. The technique of climbing up a rope had to be mastered. This has since proved very useful.

Going to HMAS Lonsdale in open truck cat calls were the order of the day - “ginger” for Red Heads. Also one particular chap who was always standing outside a workshop being bald was “curly”.

Evening meal at 1800 was stew followed by tinned fruit with custard. The stew many nights consisted of rabbits cut in three plus potato, onion and cabbage dished up as “head”-“guts”-“bum” depending on your luck of the serve.

Homework occupied 1900 to 2100 before lights out at 2200. Those who wished, could after 2100, go ashore to sleep and with leave approval report next morning at school.

Melbourne natives went home non natives to Navy House I stayed aboard.

The school week was Monday to Friday with Saturday and Sunday leave. Jack Doherty was a character in the class who told shaggy dog stories. He once caused a stir on a Collins Street train by donning his gas mask causing several people to scream. He did not pass his exams.

Weekend activities revolved about Navy House Hospitality Invitations, a Saturday night dance in a hall on Collins Street and Sunday afternoon at The Power House dance at Albert Park Lake where the US Marine Big Band played. It was open to all Services and was free admission. Dancing partners came from the local areas. I once joined a group accepting the invitation for four sailors to be picked up by car to play billiards at a home in Toorak. Drinks in the billiard room during several games of billiards with the man of the house. As it was the maid’s night off the Lady of the house prepared and served a great spread for supper. After supper we were driven back to Navy House.

After the final exams a farewell dinner was held on 15th September 1943 at Butleigh Wooton Kew. (Editor’s note: See copy of menu and attendees names elsewhere in this book).

There were definitely two US Marines H.J. Grabowski and B.E. Sandlin and possibly a third H.E. Fullerton in the class. (Ian Shackelton may be able to confirm). They were learning radio maintenance as were destined to join the Coast Watch operating under cover in the then held Japanese territory of New Guinea and Philippines. All three may have been killed in service.

All the Navy men who passed exams held after six months at Melbourne Technical College went to HMAS Cerberus as Seaman (Round Rig was still our dress of the day) for further training before becoming, Radar (sic) Mechanic(W).

At HMAS Cerberus 24th October 1943 until 17th November 1943 for general Naval Routine Training, Gunnery (Commander Otto Beecher

), Signals etc as Ordinary Seaman.18<sup>th</sup> November 1943 signed on as Radio Mechanic (W) for "2 years or the duration and six months thereafter" in RAN (HO) < Service records to this date are RANR but no F service number shown only RAN 27002 > 19<sup>th</sup> November promoted to Leading Radio Mechanic (W) and issued with "pusser's" square rig and moved to Petty Officer's Mess. Assigned some Duty PO duties such as early morning shakes (even if some three badge PO could ring more sea water out of his socks than we had ever seen) learnt the need for lemonade next morning after a session on "Murphy's White Flash". Instruction continued.

On 16<sup>th</sup> December drafted to HMAS Rushcutter Sydney. Class was required to live out while attending HMA Radio School South Head later HMAS Watson. Eight of us secured one room at the Service Hostel 44 Macleay Street Kings Cross. All gear kept under your bed and a few inches between beds requiring tolerance when moving about. A tram ride to South Head Terminus then a walk to HMA Radio School. Again the school day 0900 to 1545 thence leave to find an evening meal. Lunch was usually at Watson Bay Tea rooms/baths and if weather suitable a swim before returning to our lessons.

After some time at Macleay Street Ray Findlay and self found accommodation at a house in North Bondi-dinner bed and breakfast sharing a room. This address allowed us to swim at Bondi before dinner at 6PM. On Monday mornings we played poker using tram ticket numbers to see who paid fares for rest of week.

At weekends everyone went their own way. For my part I usually stayed in Neutral Bay with McLeod-Boltons. Ken was a WW1 Veteran and President of North Sydney RSL where we went most Saturday nights to the dance and afterwards to the Neutral Bay Club with the two Williams girls to party around their piano. Their father Hilton was Club Manager.

Several Saturday lunches at Arron's Hotel in company with an Army chap Bert Jewell who had lost a leg in Middle East and the Williams girls. Bert had an "in" with head waiter so

always had a good table and a bottle or two of Reche's Pilsner.(then very scarce) Sunday at Bolton's then back to North Bondi by ferry and train.

18<sup>th</sup> March 1944 passed exams to be granted Non-Substantive Rate of Leading Radio Mechanic (W) in set types A286P9 (10cm wave length Surface Warning Set manufactured by AWA in Sydney Australia) and A272 (Air Warning designed to have a range of some 70 miles) both fitted in Australian made Corvettes.

At graduation muster at HMA Radio School Lieutenant Gloury addressed all the class and asked each of us whether we would prefer to go to sea or to a shore establishment depending on our marks. I was a little hesitant about answering but chose sea. (To learn much later I nearly finished on shore) Next was a draft to Draft Pool at HMAS Rushcutter to await arrival of HMAS Fremantle on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1944. During wait worked in research laboratory under Sub Lieutenant Medley ( Batchelor of Science/Physics if I remember correctly) who was working on improvements to the 10 cm wavelength "Magnetron" Valve as fitted to the A286 set.

Sent to Sick Bay to request "Two in one arm, One in the other" being the required inoculations before joining HMAS Fremantle which had berthed at Garden Island en-route from Darwin to Melbourne for a refit.

So to sea suffering effects of inoculations to find Radar sets not operating up to standard nor held in high regard as no Mechanic had previously been in crew. RAN Leading Telephonist not trained in Radar and not interested. He warned me to keep out of his WiT Room which I did. Not yet aged nineteen found me in Petty Officers' Mess as a Leading hand with all the other members over thirty years of age. Spike the "Buffer" had already served for over 20 years as had "Dutchy" Holland the Chief Stoker Petty Officer. "Dutchy" had done his 20 year time after which he had run a pub at Dimboola in the Snowy Mountains area and was Canteen Manager. Lou the able Seaman mess man delighted in putting



a tin of Crusader Milk on his head and pretending to be the 286 radar set whenever I came into the mess. I missed a few meals on the way to Melbourne.

Leave from Melbourne so back across the desert to Perth and back.

After returning from leave managed with the help of a shore based mechanic to fix sets so as to operate more efficiently after replacing the 286 "Magnetron", drying and sealing the 272 coaxial cable and the like. The six radar operators had joined the ship in Darwin from Operator Training School. As sets had not worked efficiently did not have a good standing with rest of crew. "Ping" was battling to cope with Asdic and the skipper Lieutenant Commander Norm Bolton yet to be convinced of Radar's reliability.

Refit completed so back to sea headed for the Darwin to Thursday Island Convoy Run at second degree of readiness with night and day air cover. Called at Cairns for fuel. No drinking glasses in pubs so drank out of a bean tin if you did not have a "Lady Blamey" (a cut off beer bottle). Pubs only open between 1600 and 1800. Canteen Fund financed purchase of several dozen glasses for mess deck plus records for radio. However the record purchase was six copies of "Paper Doll" which the purchaser played when ever he could until they were all broken quite some time later.

The run between Darwin and Thursday Island as escort, at second degree of readiness, for mainly tankers supplying oil to US Pacific Fleet, Army and Air Force continued for several months of 1944.

At Thursday Island our Petty Officers' mess was able to have the ration of "3 bottles of spirits per man per month" drawn by the Australian Army Water Transport Sergeants' Mess where we all spent many enjoyable evenings. As we were able as a seagoing vessel to draw fresh fruit and vegetables in Darwin some of these were always reserved for the Water Transport Mess who were on "hard tack".

One army man who always over imbibed would declare "time flies said the monkey as he threw the alarm clock out the window" as he threw an old alarm clock out the window when it was time for us to leave. The clock was always returned inside.

RAAF pranks when changing from daylight patrol to night patrol once resulted in one unfortunate pilot when "attacking" the other plane, which went into a dive, being unable to pull out of his because he was under the other plane's dive path just disappeared below only leaving an oil slick on the sea a few hundred yards from our ship.

In Darwin a regular job was to work on the 272 coaxial cable at the top of the mast so as to drive out the moisture until the resistance reading was near "infinity" and reseal the cable with "tar". On one occasion a RAAF Spitfire "buzzed" me and so it was "hang on tight" to avoid being sucked off by the slip stream and relying on the safety belt to prevent falling. The skipper put a stop to that practice.

Towards the end of 1944 the regular "second degree of readiness" convoys to Thursday Island were replaced by escort duties and no air cover. They were sometimes replaced by navigation duties using ASDIC and accumulated knowledge on courses to escort mainly tankers from outside Darwin through the Clarence and Dundas Straights (sic) and vice versa as up to date charts for these straits were not generally available. The wait for the next return ship enabled us to anchor in a bay in Arnham Land (Port Essington??) and to go ashore. Fishing from the motor boat using hand grenades once resulted in a turtle being landed. Using Crusader milk from whaler's emergency supplies (needed replacing every so often) Harry Bow the ex peacetime Kanimbla cook made a great Turtle Soup for all the crew. The shooting party once brought back a buffalo which until we caught about a half ton of mackerel East of Bibby Lighthouse near Thursday Island was better than bully beef. The buffalo had to be thrown over the side as fridge would not hold both buffalo and fish.

Sharks in Thursday Island harbour were always around. "Dutchy" was the fisherman. Using a cod line with a 44 gallon drum at the end from which a hook and bait was suspended once a 14

COPY

SUBJECT: U.S. RADAR TYPE S.C.4 NO. 2098/597/54

FROM The Commodore Commanding H.M.A. Squadron C/G.P.O. (At SYDNEY).

TO The Secretary, Naval Board. (Copies to Commanding Officer H.M.A.S. "ARUNTA" Supply Officer, H.M.A.S. "KUTTABUL".)

DATE 17th October, 1946.

Be pleased to inform the Naval Board that the sum of £2 sterling has been allocated from the Herbert Lott Trust Efficiency Fund to Petty Officer Radio Mechanic P. Glover, Official Number 27002, of H.M.A.S. Arunta.

2. Considerable trouble had been experienced in "Arunta" with the U.5. Radar Type S.C.4 fitted, but neither Dockyard nor U.S. Naval Technicians had been able to ascertain the cause of the trouble or effect any marked improvement in the performance of this set

3. Petty Officer Glover, who joined "ARUNTA" on 16th April, 1946, although he had had no previous experience of or instruction in this type pf set, after much hard work in learning the equipment, succeeded in locating and remedying the cause of its inefficiency.

4. It is requested that Finance Authority for this payment may be communicated.

(SGD. ) JOHN COLLINS

COMMODORE

foot shark was hooked. It took over four hours to bring it aboard by means of a depth charge davit.

A tow job taking a barge for BHP from Darwin to drop it at Koolon Island in Yampi Sound and then to Onslow before returning to Darwin using the inside course along the Kimberley coast in late 1944 provided a change.

The barge was delivered right to a BHP mooring point attached to the cliff at the water level of Koolon Island. No road access to the island had by then been made as Iron ore mining had not commenced. However we were able to see where it was said a Japanese ship had been alongside and mined iron ore directly into its hold. On the voyage from Derby to Onslow one afternoon a big school of dolphins came alongside the ship. Some just "leaned" on the ship's side at bow waterline so as to be pushed along, others surfed in the bow wave and others raced ahead. At intervals they changed their position with others. These fifty or so Dolphins made a great show.

Before Onslow was reached we had to weather a cyclone by steaming into the sea at a speed to prevent waves breaking over the ship. The height of the waves both fore and aft when ship in a trough were above the bridge. It was quite an experience.

At Onslow to fuel alongside allowed a visit to the pub reached by jetty train. Pub's stock of spirits was good. Skipper gave UK to accept spirits aboard to take down South (beer and spirits there were both scarce.) provided they were "Bonded" until we eventually reached Brisbane for the refit and leave. This was done and no one erred.

Onslow was also a fuelling station for USN Submarines coming or going to Fremantle or Albany from a tour of duty around "East Indies" now Indonesia or the North Indian Ocean. A drama occurred when a few crew of Submarine had landed a four dozen case of "Crystal Bitter" beer (brewed in Geraldton and sold at pub) on submarine's deck and endeavouring to get it below. At this moment Submarine's Skipper appeared and with out

ceremony pushed case of beer overboard! The locals immediately started a salvage operation before our duty watch could be mustered.

Returning to Darwin on ASDIC patrol from Onslow needed to fuel at Derby. Because of tide speed into King Sound full steam at sixteen knots plus tide resulted in a ship speed of some twenty six knots. At Derby tied up alongside the merchantman we were to escort to Darwin.

Train ride from wharf to stop nearest "Spinifex Hotel" only to find "beer is off" as someone had broken a window. No worry, barman armed with hammer calmly removed three boards from a beer case nailed them across window as a perfect fit and "beer on". Derby was then a frontier town.

Stoker Durkin did not show for his first watch out of Derby. It turned out he was drunk and causing a disturbance when crossing merchantman's deck to board so someone put him under an upside down one hundred gallon galvanised iron tank from whence he appeared about thirty six hours later. Signal said "We have your Stoker Durkin" reply "Put him to work until he is able return to his ship in Darwin".

The weather from Derby was overcast all the way so no navigational sun or star shots able to be taken. Merchant Skipper was in charge and our skipper after five days was very worried as to accuracy of our position. In daylight 272 Radar reported land quite a distance straight ahead! As sets had not worked efficiently did not have a good standing with rest of crew. "Ping" was battling to cope with Asdic and the skipper Lieutenant Commander Norm Bolton yet to be convinced of Radar's reliability. The 286 Radar was started and sure enough the outline of Point Blaze came up not far away. Needless to say our Skipper took command corrected course and we reached Darwin safely. Radar earned a "brownie point".

A trip to Port Essington with an Australian Army Brigadier and his batman provided a variation. The aim was to find the remains of the abandoned town of Victoria which had been established in eighteen hundreds. On the high

tide the motor boat and whaler under sail and then oars took the party (including me) right up the tidal creek while the ship anchored in deep water to await for the low tide. Everyone very amused when after wading ashore the Brigadier sat on a log and proceeded assisted by his ever attentive batman to remove his wading shoes, dry and powder his feet, before putting on his marching boots. Before the Brigadier was back on his feet one of our party had located the remains of the buildings and graves. After many photos and more searching and sketching of site Brigadier gave the order to "return to ship". It was easier said than done. A few yards from shore the motor boat stopped. The engine had seized due to the water intake sucking in seaweed as the boat had bottomed on the tidal mud. The Brigadier transferred to the whaler which was pushed into deep water and sailed back to ship. I stayed with motor boat to await high tide to clear seaweed and hopefully get engine to start. Arriving back at the ship at 2am clad only in shorts and shirt and freezing cold the three of us were greeted at the gangway by the Duty Officer and Engineer Officer Williams who then dispensed a "tot" of Wardroom Rum all round. Xmas day 1944 started at sea bound for Darwin after a navigational run East through the Clarence and Dundas Straits. Soon after dawn the ship hove to. As I was not watch keeping I was in shore party to land and to bring back a large branch of a tree. This was fine except to be attacked by a mass of sand flies caused some distress lasting until some time later. Later on Xmas 1944 morning with the branch secured to our mast we steamed into Darwin in grand style.

The aboard Xmas day church service was conducted by the visiting Padre who brought his collapsible organ. This was played by one of our crew and helped the hymn singing. A great Xmas Dinner followed with the Officers waiting on tables set

up on after deck. Beer rations had been saved and were dispensed from fridge accordingly. One of the crew commandeered the organ and made it "jump" with all the popular tunes until well into the evening. A very happy day was had by all.

An escort of a ship with a cargo of equipment to build the RAAF Airstrip on Melville Island to and from Darwin resulted in five days anchored off Snake Bay Mission before the return voyage. The Mission supplied the ship with bags of oysters, braces of wild duck and fish. One evening the crew were invited ashore to attend a Corroboree. On another day we played their team Australian Rules football. Also some were taken shooting. The mission had formed a RAN Reserve Group of Locals. RAN had supplied uniforms, rifles and radio contact with Darwin so this group could be a Coast Watch Team for early warning of approaching Japanese Aircraft headed for Darwin. The Corroboree was about air raids on Darwin. The first act by four actors acted out the scene where two were lying down reading books and not paying any attention which enabled the other two each with arms out like an aeroplane to attack drop their bombs and leave before the other two could retaliate. The second act was just the reverse. The two who had been lying down were now keeping a lookout saw the approaching aeroplanes so these two took off as aeroplanes in time to engage the attackers in a dog fight and send them on their way.

An emergency occurred when one of our crew in the shooting party accidentally discharged his 303 rifle into his groin. One of the accompanying RAN Mission men then ran some miles to report the accident. As urgent medical help was required ships' radio silence was authorised to be broken so a coded signal could be sent. The Leading Telegraphist was unable to obtain a response from the ship's transmitter. Hearing of this I offered to help which was accepted. Together we found a foreign object had fallen onto the radio wave output line and was shorting out the radio signals. Once this was removed the transmitter was on the air and a doctor and aircraft requested from Darwin. The crew member survived but I believe suffered a limp for life.

About the fourth day of our stay some of us visited the airstrip construction site which was a little way from the Mission in virgin timbered country. The timber by then had been cleared and the runway in process of being formed and graded. All the equipment in use had been that

unloaded from the escorted ship and supplies were still being unloaded. Many men women and children from the Mission were all happily in line across the strip picking up roots and sticks as part of the construction process.

On the Sunday the ship gave an afternoon tea party for the Mission Folk. As they boarded each received either a bar of chocolate or a tin of Log Cabin Tobacco. Big pots of tea, a bag of sugar and several oven trays of cake followed the conducted tour of the ship. The joy and amazement of these simple people was heart warming. A complete mystery as to where the other person was actually located was created by the voice pipe conversation between the bridge and engine room.

At the suggestion of the Rev Gribble, who was in charge of the mission, a star shell was fired from the four inch gun. First there was a trial run with explanation during which there was much laughing and talk by the onlookers. The gun was then fired and deadly silence fell after the bang. After about half a minute one of the women pinched another on the arm. She shouted something and then bedlam broke out. It appears they all thought they were dead after the gun was fired. A happy day was had by all.

On one return voyage from Thursday Island to Darwin everything that could go wrong with radar equipment went wrong. The 276 aerial stopped rotating so up the mast, the 286 Magnetron needed changing, resistors burnt out and operators complained they had lost echoes of ship being escorted. I did not see my hammock for five days. As when I had a few minutes respite "crashed" on chartroom cushions which were opposite the radar cabin. The final straw was when ship closed up to enter Darwin harbour the reading lamp in the radar cabin blew! Needless to say I slept for the first day in Darwin.

At sea, when weather was calm as it could be for several days, Crib competitions were often run over several days. These were played in the afternoon on deck with teams from every mess and the Wardroom. Another time it was very rough all the way and I was seasick to the extent that I eventually vomited green bile over the

side between fixing a fault. This was the time I also lost my Onoto Fountain Pen (very special then) out of my top shirt pocket. One other crew member just collapsed onto the waste (sic) deck and lay there for the voyage. If anyone offered to help he tried to throw a punch. He was a gunnery rating which at that time was in short supply! Eventually the Skipper was able to convince the Naval Board he suffered chronic seasickness and to draft him ashore for good.

One of the "pink advices" from the Admiralty ordered a change in the IFF code (identification friend or foe). This advised code was different to the code of the US Seventh Fleet to which we were attached. Just as well the British Fleet did not turn up until this mistake corrected, needless to say our code was not changed. A dental appointment with the Commander Dental Surgeon in Darwin to ascertain the cause of an intermittent tooth ache resulted in the necessity to have a wisdom tooth removed. This was done by a Sub Lieutenant Dental Surgeon just out of Sydney Dental School. He used a carpenter's chisel and mallet to remove the bone impaction around my tooth. The mallet blow was bone rattling!

Films in Darwin were available ashore and on other ships. One particular night watching a film sitting on a hatch of a Liberty ship the tropical rain was so heavy we were unable to clearly see the screen. A rain cape and cap half kept one dry. It was an enjoyable film.

After Xmas 1944 we proceeded South for the annual refit in Evans Deakin Dockyard Brisbane. To Perth by train required three all night sitting up before the Nullarbor trip arriving after four changes of rail gauge for two weeks leave and then train return to Brisbane.

Our new station was Biak North of the Equator. At the crossing of the Equator King Neptune and his Bears came aboard to initiated any of the crew new to his Northern domain. The voyage from Brisbane included calls at Port Moresby, Rabaul, Manus (chesterfield cigarettes, tinned fruit juice and USN Jeans), Finschafen Wewak (to drop off an Army barge towed from one of the previous ports. The army were still engaging the Japanese and from the



sea we could see the front line half way up the mountain which came down to the beach. The army had previously landed on this beach) before reaching Biak and anchoring in the deep water lagoon.

The greeting signal was "When are you painting you ship the correct colour?" as by this time it was showing the time spent at sea. The dockyard paint colour had not been updated probably because of security as to where the ship was bound.

The US Air Force Base on Biak was a hive of activity. A plane was either landing or taking off about every minute twenty four hours of the day. Also here was a plane graveyard which we frequented to salvage the window Perspex (some made broaches (sic) from it). I also salvaged electrical cable, aluminium tube and reading lights. Boiler cleans in the isolated Meios Woendi lagoon. We could see the anchor at the end of twenty fathoms of chain sitting on pure white sand. This was a picture post card tropical island with a clean white sand shore lined with palms. There was a small native settlement. The natives visited using outrigger canoes trading coconuts and "cats' eyes". Every morning one trader would come to the Petty Officers' mess porthole with his cry of "cat eye dollar". A pest so one unkind crew member gave him a squirt with the fire hose. The pest got the message.

One day at Biak when I returned to the landing having been ashore to a USAF Store to obtain a valve for the mess deck radio I saw my ship steaming out of the lagoon!

The coxswain of the motor boat from the HMAS Junee informed me it was a submarine alarm raised by the RAAF, all ships to sea and I was to board Junee. Aboard Junee I was a supernumery and the Radar Mechanic, whose name I am unable to recall, found me a blanket and stretcher so I was able to sleep on deck out of harms way. The crew were at action stations. In the night I was awoken by the noise of the main forward gun firing a star shell! The whole area was lit up to expose from the pitch black night several ships including the HMAS Kanimbla filled with troops. It was said the

Junee skipper was "Trigger Happy" and previously worked in a pickle factory. At dawn "the submarine" was located on the horizon and on closer inspection it was seen to be a very large log with a branch pointing upwards so as to give the appearance of a submarine. On return to anchor in Biak I was able to rejoin my ship and install the valve in the mess deck radio.

Just before the land assault on Tarakan in Borneo we operated from Morotai. As Boom Defence Vessel on the day the assault armada which had formed in Morotal Harbour departed each of the ships, landing barges and other assorted craft all filled to capacity with men and armaments passed within a few yards. It was evening before the last one passed.

In July 1944 I was drafted to HMAS Leeuwin and my relief arrived soon after. On 27th July 1944 at Biak I disembarked from HMAS Fremantle armed with a Priority Three Travel Warrant reported to the RAAF Transport Officer at the air strip. I was soon aboard a DC4 seated on a bench which backed onto the aircraft side fuselage as were the other service personal from all services. A soldier lay in the aisle on a stretcher in underpants as he had a tropical skin rash from head to toe and was being bathed with a solution all the time. The pilot had been in the same class as me at Northam High School. The flight over Dutch New Guinea to the overnight stop at Merauke enabled one to see down into the deep valleys that formed part of the Owen Stanley Range, where isolated villages existed. At this time very few visitors would have been to these inaccessible locations. Next day a daylight take-off to fuel at Higgins Field Cape York. Next overnight stop reached by dusk was Townsville. Here learned that I was on the next day flight to Brisbane but then it was overnight train to Sydney where if I arranged it with Railway Transport Officer on arrival I should report to Mascot Airport to fly to Adelaide. This I did and I was then able to spend the night with friends at Manly as one of them offered to drive me to Mascot to arrive there by 6am. I was given a seat as before in a DC4 and the flight was direct to Adelaide. NSW had received some very heavy rain so once over the

Blue Mountains one could see water for miles. After landing at the RAAF Parafield airstrip assigned a bed in Sergeant's Mess. The mess had a great number of RAF men who were making the most of it so a party was the order of the evening. As it was near the end of the month the drink of the night was Advocaat & Cherry Brandy as stocks of other drinks were finished until the next month, At 0600 next morning I joined the queue for Perth in the RAAF hanger. A young RAAF Airman who only had five days of leave was in front of me but his travel priority was such that he really did not qualify for a seat. I explained I was on draft and another day would not make any difference so RAAF Transport Officer gave him the last seat.

It was a repeat party performance that night. The following morning I was allotted a seat and took off for Perth with a stop for fuel at Forrest. Arriving in Perth without any white shirts, as they were in my kit bag which was coming by train from Sydney, I wore a sleeveless pullover back to front under my square rig. Also I was told I had to "live out" which presented a problem as both my parents were in the Army away from Perth and they no longer had a house anywhere. I contacted an Aunt of mine who was in Perth who then arranged for a friend of hers to offerer (sic) me a bed. Their flat was in "Fairway" Nedlands on Stirling Highway so convenient transport to the Naval Store in Shuffrey Street Fremantle where I was stationed.

The Royal Navy was mustering a fleet from ships on the Atlantic Station to send to the Pacific. Shuffrey Street was full of new Tropic Proofed RN Radar sets. The Atlantic ships' radar sets were not tropic proofed so the plan was to exchange them at Fremantle for tropic proofed ones in Shuffrey Street before arriving on the Pacific Station.

I joined the team consisting of several other Radar Mechanics, an Able Seaman come storeman, a WRAN Clerk all under Lieutenant Burnell. Our job was to set up each set and ensure it ran free of faults for a period and then it was repacked. During the run time most of us made foreigners. In my case I designed and made a broadcast band radio housed in a

polished cabinet made from "masonite". Lieutenant Burnell whose family owned a radio shop in Queen Street Perth was a good source of parts. In return we helped to paint his car. He also would take us at lunch time to Port Beach for a swim whilst the sets were running to test their endurance.

The Atomic bombs were dropped after which VP day came, the RN did not come, so we were out of a job well so we thought. However it was "ships in reserve" next stop.

Again I joined a team consisting of a Supply PO, myself as Radar Mechanic, a Leading Torpedo man, an ERA plus several seamen all with a Corvette Skipper in command. The ships were tied up alongside the one jetty at Garden Island which had been used as a RN Submarine Base during the war and now HMAS Stirling. The ships were on auxiliary power so generally were "dead", cold and dark. Our task was to run equipment according to a schedule so as to maintain all in operational order. The boilers were also being cleaned. We were 48 hours on 48 hours off. We commuted sometime to Rockingham in a small motor boat but on days when skipper came aboard by motor launch from Fremantle we returned to Robb's Jetty in the motor launch. In both cases a bus to Fremantle and or Perth was the order of the day.

Once on arriving at Rockingham we were advised by the locals that a "German" was hiding in the sand hills. We investigated and located the man who was a German officer. He had escaped from a POW camp nearby but he did not know the Pacific War was over. He gave himself up and was handed over to police. As I had gained entrance to University of WA at the 1942 Leaving Examinations and war had ended I decided to write to the Drafting Officer at South Head (HMAS Watson) requesting a replacement and discharge. The reply was a draft to the Radar Pool at HMAS Watson 15th March 1946. Someone from the drafting office became my replacement! He was a native of Fremantle.

After another train trip across the Nullarbor back at HMAS Watson. Whilst in the pool awaiting a draft we were kept occupied and

lived in but able to go ashore when not rostered for duty watch. At this time the game "Puff Ball" was all the rage. It was played by two teams like football on the ping pong table with a ping pong ball being blown by mouth during play. (the rules after time escape me but 'off the table" was a lost point). Watson had become much more "Pusser" than when I was first there.

I was drafted to HMAS Arunta and joined on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1946. This ship a Tribal Class Destroyer had just arrived back from a tour of duty in Japan and its war service with the US Seventh Fleet. It was at Garden Island Dockyard in refit. All the old crew had been drafted off the ship to other ships or demobilised. For me it was back to Perth by train for leave. Upon rejoining the ship I was part of a new ships company under the Command of Commander Gatacre. Included were many Ordinary Seamen just out of Flinders Naval Training. These men had joined after war ended for six years and included some of the Radar Operators. The Petty Officers were mostly RAN who had not yet finished their time or had signed on for another period. The previous Radar Mechanic had been "Nobby" Clarke whom I did not know or meet.

The Arunta was fitted with three Radar Sets. US Type S.C.4 (air warning which was not held in high regard); US Type SG (Serial no 5 surface warning with PPI indicator on bridge): RN 285 (gunnery control which had never been used to control the firing of the 4.7 inch armament which it could have done because the gunnery plot room was the preferred control centre. The Plot Room did use information from the 285). The L.O.R.A.N. Radio Navigation System was also installed. It calculated by receiving radio signals from shore based radio transmitters a position at any time provided at least two transmitter signals were being received. Stations were located in the Pacific Ocean Area. This was only accurate to within a mile or so and not generally used except to sometimes check the ship's position calculated from dead reckoning when sun or star shots were not available because of cloud cover.

We had a shakedown cruise to Hervey Bay Queensland where night orders the day we arrived said "sea boots and lanyards" were the dress of the day for those going ashore to "shoot crocodiles" the next day. Many of the new ODs could clearly see them on the shore! Only two ODs mustered at 0600 to go ashore the next morning. One OD complained of pains in the stomach. It transpired he was hungry- as had not eaten for several days as thought he would be sea sick. It turned out he was a "good sailor".

Returned to Sydney where training trips to sea occurred to bring the new crew up to standard. ASDIC once had a submarine to find. Gunnery and Radar a towed target (do not hit towing vessel). Torpedo and depth charge drill with both fired. Torpedo was recovered, depth charges out of time so detonated.

During this time I found the SC4 was not performing up to expectations. A detail reading of the Instruction Manual followed by a climb up to the Aerial revealed there was a colour code mismatch between the Aerial and main set below. I duly reported my findings. Sometime later it was organised that I should inspect, at the Naval Store in Sydney, the last of the three SC4 sets received during the war for fitting to Tribal Class Destroyers. The inspection revealed that the set then in store soon to be fitted to HMAS Bataan was also a mismatch, the Aerial to match Arunta's colour coded main set serial number was still in a packing case allocated to the remaining set whose serial number had been allocated to Bataan the construction of which was at this time nearly completed. A change of Arunta's aerals then took place at Garden Island Dockyard. Warramunga it was found did have a correctly matched set and explained why during the war it was more efficient at picking up aircraft than Arunta.

Hopeful of studying at University of WA upon demobilisation I enrolled for a correspondence course in Calculus with the University arranged by Lieutenant Gloury at South Head. This course filled in evenings at sea but somewhat difficult because of time lag between questions and answers. No one on



board was able to assist but the course was excellent.

A visit to Brisbane for the Brisbane Royal Show meant we were unable to read the "Joe Palooka" comic strip in the Daily Telegraph to find out if the bullet heading for Joe would hit him. It was then realised that our First Lieutenant's brother was none other than David McNicol who wrote a column in the paper. The war was over so a telegram was despatched asking for a report on what happened. David published it in his column and as a result three mail bags full of Telegraphs came aboard with the mail when we reached Brisbane sent by Telegraph Readers.

Another time we were escort for a RN Submarine travelling North East of the Barrier Reef. There was a swell all the way from South America. So for several days travelling at six knots parallel with the swell thirty five degree rolls were the order of the day. Everyone just wedged themselves in some where and waited. The submarine travelled just below the swell only surfacing to charge batteries and enquire how we were faring.

Fuelling at Manus, which was a shadow of it wartime self, we saw how quickly the jungle took over. One could not see or access any of the war time buildings that were not currently being used because the tropical jungle growth had taken over. The USN had left some time ago.

Commodore Collins was to represent Australia at the Philippine Independence Day Ceremony on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1946. He travelled from Sydney in the Captain's Day Cabin and exercised his authority. Everyone in Rig of The Day, blues at first (which had all been stowed below or left in Sydney) then tropical rig which we had ready for Manila, upper and lower deck rounds (these required "shifters" to remove "dhobie tins" and the like from one deck to the other as the inspection proceeded), as well as various drills. The Skipper was very displeased so took sick on inspection day! As the Commodore and his party was about to step onto the ladder outside the Skipper's Sea Cabin from the deck below the Skipper appeared in his silk dragon monogrammed dressing gown, excused himself (having right of way on ship under his command) proceeded down the ladder to the heads while the Commodore waited!. I saw this pantomime first

hand as the next stop was the Radar Equipment Cabin with a low bulkhead door where I was waiting. No acknowledgement from the Commodore when I alerted him to mind his head not even a remark about the cabin!

Manila Bay was full of US Navy ships and our anchorage was about a mile from the landing serviced by a USN Duty Boat. The Harbour was formed by a breakwater of sunken merchant ships. The Commodore disembarked and was not returning with us as was joining his Flag Ship (the name escapes me). Joe Power the Canteen Manager went ashore as Postman. He returned after several hours much the worse for wear complete with mail, many Parker 61 fountain pens and a recommendation for everyone to visit the "EIGHT BALL CLUB". Shore leave was up in the air as the order from shore was that our Shore Patrol to carry side arms. The Skipper would not agree. It was finally agreed after several exchanges of signals sheafed bayonets would be substituted.

I was made PO Shore Patrol on one day. The landing was about two to three miles from Downtown Manila "honky tonk" area where all the action was located including "EIGHT BALL CLUB". The brief was to count everyone back aboard and then return. Liberty Men had been warned not to drink anything unless they saw bottle opened and it was still sealed. The USN Shore Patrol had an office with a wired enclosure about 20x20 feet at the entrance to the "honky tonk" to which we reported. The enclosure was to contain the men who had drunk "firewater", were causing a disturbance and had been apprehended. Usually they passed out after they reached the Office. By dark the enclosure had many occupants stacked like railway sleepers. At about midnight a tropical downpour resulted in two feet of water in the streets. This caused havoc when it rushed through the enclosure. The men at the bottom having been there the longest came to first so struggled to get out from under so upset the "sleeper stack" A mass of moving arms and legs.

When any of our men finished up non compass (sic) we or their mates took them back in a truck to the boat landing to catch next duty boat back to the ship. By 0200 all had been accounted for

even the group who had been taken up by taxi to the "Mountain Night Club" away from the main city area.

There was no shore leave on Independence Day as civil unrest was expected. We had been away some six weeks and as no stores available in Manila on voyage back to Sydney whilst we had cases of butter but no flour. At a stop for fuel a USN Submarine had the reverse position so a trade was done. It was not until the first bread was baked and served did we find, as the flour was full of weevils, if you removed these one had no bread left! One became accustomed to the taste and anyhow no other option but to eat this fare together with canned beans and the like. On reaching Sydney after the first meal everyone was "sick" especially those who had enjoyed a beer and eaten steak and eggs ashore.

During the time in Sydney a few drafts brought new faces into the mess. One was Ronnie Jones who had just come back from Japan on HMAS Baatan and joined a few days before HMAS Anunta sailed for Japan in December 1946.

A call at Port Moresby resulted in the private purchase by our mess of a ton of sugar from Burns Phillips for trading in Japan plus a case of rum to be bonded for our Xmas party. The trading of sugar was arranged after we had been in Japan a few weeks by one of our men meeting with the "Boss of the Black Market" in the mountains outside Kure. He was away for two days. The exchange took place late on a no moon night. A craft made from a large log, powered by a small diesel engine, came alongside then a bag of sugar was lowered in a bucket after which the bucket returned with the agreed 7,000 Yen in 100 Yen notes (the price of a top grade string of Mikimoto Cultured Pearls). The exact amount was in the bucket every time. The "Black Market" in Japan at that time was tolerated. The shops had sugar at two prices. One for purchase with ration tickets the other at the prevailing black market price.

Each first dog watch as we passed through the waters between New Guinea and the Philippines the Skipper would recount the details of the Naval Battles that had occurred in these waters. These battles are probably the last

naval battles that will ever occur between two opposing battle fleets consisting of battleships, cruisers, destroyers with air cover and attack from carrier based planes. The Arunta had taken part in many of them.

One middle watch the lookout saw straight ahead a line of foam on the calm moonlit sea. Radar and ASDIC had no echo. It was an uncharted reef just to the surface. The alert lookout saved the ship from what could have been a crisis if it had hit it at our Cruising speed of about 20 knots. Radar and ASDIC did pick it up when closer so as to define its size and position to report the hazard to navigation.

The War Correspondent Jack Percival was a passenger to Japan from Sydney. He was sea sick most of the way. On leaving the ship he extended an invitation to any of the crew to visit the Tokyo Correspondents' Club with entry as his guest.

We reached Sasebo the Naval Base in Kagoshima Bay at the Southern end of the Japanese Island of Kyushu just before Xmas Day 1946. Our anchorage was about seven miles from the landing at Sasebo. After an exchange of signals the Skipper made the journey to see the USN N.O.I.C. Sasebo for lunch armed with two bottles of whisky. The motor boat returned without him. About 0010 the next day the signal PSB (please send boat) received from Skipper. Upon his return in a very inebriated state his instruction was "take over Number One and proceed with care to secure alongside the sea wall adjacent to the USN Shore Signal Mast". He then retired to his sea cabin until very much later in the

day. A great achievement as a walk down a gang plank and we were ashore.

Ronnie Jones was back in town and knew the place to go "The Casaba". This was supervised by the US Marine Shore Police, The Japanese Taxi Dancers arrived at opening, time 1600 and left at 2000 under Shore Police Escort. The police remained

on duty in the dance hall. A packet of twenty cigarettes could be traded for beer and another

one for taxi dance tickets. A great dance band played all the latest tunes so everyone danced. A 2030 curfew was maintained in Sasebo so at 2000 it was a walk straight back aboard.

Ronnie faced a problem because he had, on the previous visit, promised one of the dancers he would return at Xmas and marry her and take her back to Australia! She greeted him with great enthusiasm and asked when the marriage could take place! The next night she was accompanied by her mother. Ronnie did not go ashore again. A storm in the Pacific had delayed the American ship bringing the Sasebo based US Forces their Xmas Supplies. We had ample and therefore Pat Swan the PO Cook and his men in the galley served a Xmas dinner to anyone in US uniform who happened to come aboard. Roast turkey with vegetables and leg ham followed by Xmas Pudding with ice cream. It was enjoyed by all.

“Slappsie” a 6ft 6 US Marine Sergeant was my guest who much to my amazement when incorrectly address by one of his men promptly deliver him a “back hander”. “Slappsie” rated a jeep. After consuming about half of my bottle of Burns Phillips’ (sic) rum neat he managed to reverse over the sea wall into the drink. No one was hurt and another jeep pulled it out in a matter of minutes. It was started and we were on our way.

We did several patrols from Sasebo in the Tsushima Strait between Japan and Korea. All ships were challenged as to where they were going and from whence they had come, Radar was closed up on three watches and the SG set was required all the time.

One Russian ship caused a stir as it only gave cryptic replies to the challenge such as “from whence I came” “to my destination” and the like. Gun crews were closed up and when promised a shot across its bows with guns trained towards their ship they answered correctly. We were constantly on the move whilst in Japan. Kure, (Hiroshima and atomic bomb site visited), Yokohama (a train ride to visit Tokyo), Osaka (a bus visit organised by the American Red Cross to Kyoto), Nagasaki

(ashore to see Atomic Bomb site-never mind the signs not to enter the radiation area!).

A week-end or two spent at Australian Army Sergeants Mess a short train ride South from Kure. They had a great set up as when constructed a large building to serve as a dining room and bar complete with an enormous fire place had been added as a

“foreign order” to the plans. “Turtle” an old Japanese man looked after us all providing early morning tea and keeping the fire burning. It was like a hotel. The weather was cold with snow on the ground outside but rooms were heated by kerosene heaters which also served to heat morning shaving water.

The RN Fleet Canteen at Yokohama was like an English Pub. Every night, “Fuller San” the RN PO who organised the Japanese working parties each day was always there dressed in his pyjamas. “Yes if I wake up in my pyjamas I know I was not drunk when I went to bed”. A few beers for him and we were allocated several women to look after the chores in our mess. These women were very good and cleaned as well as did the washing, mending and ironing of clothes. They would spend their spare time looking at and talking about the pictures of the wide open spaces of the Australian Countryside that were printed in the Australian Womens’ Weekly. There were no such areas to be seen where they lived in Japan. They all wanted to come back to Australia with the ship. A Sunday was the last day before the ship left Japan. Anchored in Yokohama all these women insisted on coming aboard dressed in their Sunday best and bringing cakes for afternoon tea. As we had a make and mend this was allowed. The ordinary civilian Japanese were delightful people and had no idea what their Military had been up to during the war. All the visitors were piped ashore at dusk. Then rounds by some of the duty watch to ensure no stowaways. A search of our mess located one of the women curled up in a cupboard-she wanted to come to Australia but was out of luck. She was sent ashore in tears.

The large mural about twenty feet high on the side of a dockside night club in Yokohama

advertising "Huji Fuju the Harry James of Japan" showing the Japanese man and his trumpet in the Harry James pose was indicative of the attitude of the civilians.

There was a very catching tune sung in Japanese which was being played everywhere. When it was eventually translated by General McArthur's men it was banned. The song contained the words". ... The big red American apple with the rotten core .....

Penicillin was in demand by civilians. One of the radar operators after we had all had some inoculation by needles salvaged the phials filled them with water sealed them and low and behold he had Phials of "Penicillin". He went ashore up to an area of Tokyo which had been flattened by bombing and had no trouble in selling his

wares. He told me about this great sale whereupon I pointed out to him the error of his ways as some innocent Japanese would die if injected with his "Penicillin". The next day with him I retraced his steps and he refunded the money and destroyed the phials much to the annoyance of the Japanese who had purchased it to resell at a profit.

Exercises with USN as part of a Destroyer Flotilla were interesting as Radio Voice Communications were used exclusively. The flotilla call sign was "Rattlesnake Farmyard" and at a command all the five ships change course at the same time. Radar was closed up and operators on their toes. The performance of the RN 285 Gunnery Control System was also checked out and matched with that calculated by the Control Room and found to be quicker and more accurate especially at speed in regards to changing range and bearings. Once when duty ship in Yokohama it was despatched with a medical doctor to take him to the aid of a man on a merchant man some 400 miles East. As duty ship two boilers were always warmed up so these were put on line for the maximum two boiler speed. The sea was reasonably calm and swell low so when the third boiler was on line our speed was about thirty six knots. The stern was down and the bow wave was several feet above the deck of the forecastle. It was

quite a sight. The ship vibrated and the plates of the bow area as seen from the Torpedomen's mess deck were "oil caning" (a bit like Rolf Harris' board). We reached the merchantman and after the doctor was transferred by flying boat return to port at a more fuel economical speed (we may have refuelled at sea from a tanker despatched for that purpose).

Shopping ashore resulted in many Noritake dinner sets and strings of imitation pearls as well as genuine Mikimoto being purchased. The shops would hold and pack the dinner sets for delivery to the designated boat landing. We were very rarely alongside. My purchase in Yokohama of a dinner set was delivered to the American centre across the bay where we had to collect our mail. On the particular day arranged for the pick up, arriving in the late afternoon, it was snowing and very cold. To pick up my purchase I was postman as no one else went ashore which required about a half hour trip in the open harbour duty boat. The centre also served as an American Recreation Centre. It had a huge stone open fire place opposite to which was a trap door to enable a pine tree trunk to be fed into the fire. It was nice and warm in this area despite the need to step over the two foot diameter log to get from one end to the other. I arrived back aboard all covered in snow and very cold but with the mail and my dinner set. My mother eventually used this set for years so the trip was worth while.

The father of one of the crew had traded with Japan before the war and the Japanese salesman had been to his Sydney home. The Able Seaman had the address in Hiroshima of the salesman so he went to the address and the family still lived there. They had survived the atomic bomb and now lived in a makeshift shanty as did all the other survivors. This address was a regular ashore call for a cup of coffee and to give them cigarettes, chocolate and the like. On one such visit the Japanese family produced a packaged present for the Able Seaman. Upon opening it once back on board it was found to be a fine bone china coffee set. Upon research it was found to be about four hundred years old and must have been a family treasure.



On the trip down to Sydney after handing over to my relief a Radar PO who had signed on for six years (his name I am unable to recall) I became a supernumerary. To fill in time I embarked on a “learn to touch type course” using the Radio Office typewriter. I was progressing but on reaching Perth as then unable to buy a typewriter unable to continue and have yet to master the art.

On 10<sup>th</sup> April 1947 I celebrated my 22nd Birthday at sea.

On arrival in Sydney on 21st April 1947 I immediately disembarked so as to catch the night train to Melbourne en route to HMAS Leeuwin for demobilisation vide DDN 16/47. The university year had started so I was hell bent on starting in 1947 and not having to wait until 1948. This I was able to do.

Upon leaving Arunta the Skipper bid me farewell with the “invitation if there is another war he would welcome me back to look after the radar on any ship he was on” as well as previously providing me with the reference as below. I was very flattered.

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## Thomas Neil Gulson

Tom, or Neil as he is mostly known, enlisted on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1943. Following his recruit training at HMAS Cerberus, Tom was drafted to HMAS Lonsdale to commence his Radio training. However, fate decided to give him a dose of the mumps instead, and consequent consignment to the Sick Bay. Thus when he arrived at Lonsdale some weeks later, the course was already 4 weeks in progress, and naturally he failed the first test. But fate was just as kind. During his previous school holidays between 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> years, Tom had constructed a Tasma radio receiver on the assembly line, and had also constructed single valve radios as a hobby. So the RM course presented few problems

Initially Tom and his class were billeted at Lonsdale, but after several months were told to find their own accommodation “ashore”. A small

allowance was granted. Tom and his mate Peter Gillespie found “digs” with the guesthouse “Inverleaf” at St Kilda. Daily routine Monday to Friday was transport by open tray truck from Lonsdale to the Melbourne Technical College, and return each afternoon. Extra study was arranged in Lonsdale’s Gunnery School room from 1700 to 1900 every evening. Other than these training requirements, no extra work such as guard duties were required of the RMs, nor were they required for church parades on Sundays or weekend duties. Initially breakfast and supper were provided at Lonsdale, with lunch being purchased near the Technical College. However, when they were victualled out, they had to provide for all their dietary and transport needs from the allowance given.

PT was almost unknown, but on one occasion they were required to swim off the beach in Port Melbourne’s waters. The motivation for this remains a mystery.

Following completion of his basic radio theory training at the Melbourne Technical College, Tom was drafted to HMAS Watson in Sydney for his advanced equipment training. With this newly acquired knowledge, Tom was ready to take his skills to sea. His hopes however were dashed as he received orders to proceed, by railway train instead, to Canberra, there to assume watchkeeping duties at the Naval Transmitting Station Belconnen.

In Tom’s own words:

*Duties at Belconnen were straightforward. The station was run by a group of “Shore Wireless Service” operators with CPO & PO ratings. The HO RMs were limited to watch keeping duties, and never allowed any maintenance or repair duties. ( Author’s note: Thus up to 12 months of intensive technical training invested in the HO RMs was totally wasted there.)*

*The main low frequency transmitter carrying the Bels broadcast ran at 44.2 Kcs, and pumped out 500,000 watts. The aerial was nearly half a mile long, 600 feet high & carried on 3 masts with aerial warning lights at 200, 400 and 600 feet levels. Of course the HO RMs had to climb 600*



*feet vertically up the mast to change failed warning lights.*

*A multitude of lesser transmitters communicated with locations such as Whitehall, Madang, Manus Island, Leyte using frequencies of 4,050, 5,600, 8,430, 12,170, 16,410 & 22,180 Kilocycles. Bels was keyed from HMAS Harman by land line or, theoretically by a high frequency link if and when the land line failed.*

*The Mechanics worked four hours on/four hours off on 48 hour shifts, with generally two mechanics under a SW PO as PO of the watch. I can only recall one Mechanic acting as PO of the watch during my time there.*

*One incident I remember clearly was sitting at the control room desk when the OIC Warrant Officer Phaup walked in. The PO of the watch was “resting” on a cabinet at the end of the Transmitting hall & the other Mechanic was sitting in the sun reading on the back steps. The upshot of this was the PO of the watch (Lofty Cummins) was sent to Darwin and I was denied a draft which I subsequently discovered had been approved.*

*When I first arrived at Belconnen I noticed three telephone lines marked “Gun1”, “Gun 2” & “Gun 3, and I thought “Hell, this place is well defended”. Little did I know at the time that these connected to “Gungahlin”, a smaller transmitting station up the road.*

*Tom loyally persisted with his Bels duties, all the time however negotiating for a more exciting role. His perseverance was rewarded, and he was drafted to HMAS Carpentaria, the shore based station on Thursday Island. The dramatic change from the bleak life in Canberra’s backblocks, to a warm tropical island with clear crystal sea waters and swaying palm trees, was like utopia for Tom. His duties at TI were to service the ship borne radios of any and all naval vessels passing through.*

*Again in Tom’s words:*

*I seem to recall that the valve 6V6 was the audio amplifier for most superhetrodyne receivers, along with 6A8, 6K8, 6J8 as 1<sup>st</sup> detectors &, I*

*think, 6F6 as IMF amplifier. These turned up regularly on small ships in the form of a receiver (1C6770) coupled with a C.O.P.A. transmitter in the guise of 3BZ. The 3BZ and 1C6770 set up was A.W.A. and there were other sets commonly in use. (AR8-AT5 for example), none of which could be considered effective by today’s standards.*

*One of the ongoing problems with the 3BZ equipment stemmed from the tuning instructions in the handbook which advised operators to tune the oscillator anode circuit to the “bottom of the dip”. Of course, when this was done and the output stage of the power amplifier was tuned, the “reflected impedance” in the oscillator circuit caused the oscillator to “pop out”, which it continuously did. Not a nice situation for a Telegraphist at sea.*

*There were other curious things happening. One was the bright idea to use wax as a “tropic proofing” material. The cockroaches loved it and readily ate not only the wax, but in many cases, part of the insulation.*

*Most of the sets in small ships were crystal operated on 4,300 kilocycles and, properly tuned could raise Darwin from Thursday Island quite readily. Townsville was more difficult and there was, for reasons unknown, a complete blank spot between Thursday Island and Townsville of several hundred miles. Notwithstanding this it was not unusual for “Penguin”, (in Sydney), to answer.*

*As for equipment, we had a valve tester, and a multimeter, virtually no stock of spares & only a few spare sets we could cannibalise parts from. On the other hand we discovered that Townsville had an abundance of spares but that did not help with the problems at TI.*

*Typical of Navy approach to training in those days was that of extreme specialisation. Sailors advancing in seniority of rate were seldom given training in the broader aspects of Navy life. Tom illustrates this*

*The situation of carrying the rating of Petty Officer, and having virtually no exposure, orientation or experience in shipboard life, or even depot routines created severe problems for*

*me and, I imagine, others finding themselves in the same bind. I mention the following two examples. At HMAS Penguin 14/8/45, I was an Acting PO RM, and rostered for duty as "Disciplinary Petty Officer", required to muster the "defaulters", including those held in cells. Fortunately an AB on duty told me what to do. Then again at HMAS Penguin on 2/9/45 I was rostered as PO conducting rounds with Officer of the Day, a youngish Sub Lieutenant. Neither of us even knew where to go.*

After his twelve months tour of duty at Thursday Island, Tom was drafted to Townsville for similar duties. Then he was off to HMAS Watson for demobilisation in January 1947.

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## Kevin Kennedy

MEMORIES of a Radar Mechanic, WW2 - December 2004

My mate, Jim, and I enrolled in the Royal Australian Navy in June 1942. After our medical checks, Jim was destined to be a Stoker because of his eyesight and it was Ordinary Seaman for me. Just before the "call up" in July, I was talked into applying for an Officer training course.

A big mob of us got instructions to be on Platform No1, Flinders Street Station at 9am on 15<sup>th</sup> July, where we proceeded to fill a steam train destined for Crib Point. On alighting, Stokers were instructed to muster to the left and Ordinary Seaman to the right. I rarely met up with Jim again until after discharge in 1946.

It was now time to get kitted up and when my turn came, I was given a hammock but no uniform of any sort because of the potential Officer course. Hence I paraded in my grey civvies for a couple of weeks and felt very conspicuous amongst the rest of the uniformed mob.

We had some training in the way of marching in unison just prior to a special march-past of a visiting high-ranking Officer. There would have been at least 1000 of us marching four abreast across the Parade Ground to give the salute. The

Coral Sea Battle was on about this time so there was a general air of anxiety amongst the rookies. In those days I was a keen dancer and considered I had some skills in keeping time with the beat of the music – drums in this case. It was my judgement that the mob were "racing" ahead of the beat so I adjusted to just a fraction behind their timing. Over the loud hailer came a yell from the Chief Petty Officer in charge of the assembly, "pick 'em up Kennedy!" Remember I'm the only one in civvies and because of that, mine was probably the only name the CPO knew. I quickly adjusted my timing and my learning curve.

Just after this outburst, the sirens went. Was it the real thing? We rookies didn't know but, following early instructions, we tucked our white caps under the arm, (I had none) and made for the trenches.

In the ensuing weeks we did a bit of rifle drill and I recall one occasion when I was detailed to be a member of the crew to do some training in rowing a Whaler. Being a bit under the average size, I was allocated the position at the pointy end. From that position I had reduced leverage advantage and it took all my strength to maintain the heavy oar horizontal at prolonged "rest" periods. I enjoyed the experience.

After a few weeks of being an un-uniformed sailor, volunteers were called for a Radio/Radar Mechanic's course. I elected to stay with my new mates on the Lower Deck and was promptly kitted out in my "round rig".

After six weeks at HMAS Cerberus, Crib Point, I was transferred to HMAS Lonsdale, Port Melbourne on 31<sup>st</sup> August. Whilst waiting for the Radio Course, I spent a few weeks as Petty Officers' Messman. The POs regularly came in for toast and tea or coffee between meals and during that time I reached my maximum life-weight.

The six members of our Class No10 or 11 to attend the Melbourne Technical College to do the Radio part of our training, were soon ready to go. We were a close-knit and happy group. Most of us were keen on being fit and spent most late afternoons in the gym in the Assembly Hall at

“Lonsdale”. Rope climbing was an activity that seemed to appeal, possibly with a nostalgic reaction to our views of the life of a sailor back in the windjammer days of our forefathers. A PO Gym Instructor often joined us and I regret to recall that on one occasion I broke one of his front teeth with my knee. I can only recall an amused reaction by me and that is the cause of my regret.

A vivid memory of the early training days is travelling in the back of a flattop truck to and from HMAS Lonsdale in Port Melbourne and the Melbourne Tech on the other side of town. Apart from having a few verbals with the pedestrians as we went along, today, soft seats and seatbelts would be the order-of-the-day.

There were six of us in our Class; the photo was taken on the roof of the Melbourne Technical College. Col Stewart took the photograph.

We were outnumbered by about four to one by RAAF Trainees. At lunchtime, the RAAF Trainees were marched up to the Exhibition Building. We were given one and sixpence or two shillings for our lunch each day. We spent half of it going to the Melbourne Baths nearby where we hired a towel and triangular costume and bought fruit with the change.

Shortly after finishing the radio section of our course, we were posted back to “Cerberus” at Flinders, where we were discharged from the RANR and re-enlisted in the RAN and given a new number. I don’t recall any explanation for this move but I suspect it would obligate us to return to duty with the RAN in the event of any conflict or need that might arise after our discharge at the end of the current War. We also were given our first “Hook” and re-kitted in “Square Rig”.

It was during this second stay at “Cerberus” that Bert Hanson married Mary Brady in Euroa, Ned Kelly country north of Melbourne. I was best man at the wedding. Bert was part way through a University course in Brisbane when he joined up; he subsequently graduated after the War. At the time of his retirement, Bert was Director General of the Commonwealth Forestry and Timber Bureau. Bert was widowed about 12 months ago and I visited him earlier this year (2004) in a

Retirement Village in Kew, Vic. He has the typical few problems of our age group but is in full control of his mental faculties. I think Bert is the only Radar acquaintance with whom I have had contact since the War years.

Col Stewart was another Queenslander and a good mate. During our second stint at Cerberus, we must have had a dental inspection and Col was programmed to have three teeth removed. He was given a general anaesthetic and when he woke up he discovered that all of his teeth had been extracted. Whilst recovering in hospital he contracted a dose of “crabs” – sailors will know them - with the result that he was shaved of all hair from top to toe. It was the time of Bert’s wedding and Col was another invitee. In his apology for not being able to attend the wedding, he wrote that he “was like a new born babe – no hair and no teeth”. He had a good sense of humour for all occasions.

After the conclusion of our Radar Course No6 at HMAS Watson at South Head, Sydney, Col and I were both stationed at the Navy Depot on the banks of the Brisbane River. We had more good times together and on a number of occasions we hitchhiked from Southport to Coolangatta for a weekend at the guesthouse there. It is difficult to believe that the thriving Gold Coast of today was a sleepy farming place with very few cars and fewer pick-ups, not so long ago. I next caught up with Col when he was stationed at Madang in New Guinea where we often called in. He was still there at the end of the War when I acquired from him some very useful tools and the like that were subsequently put to good use when building our homes. Col was a standard Petty Officer like the rest of us in those days. Several years later, an unmistakeable voice from behind, in Flinders Street, Melbourne, said “G’day Kennedy”. He was still in uniform and advised that he was now a “Commissioned Warrant Officer”! His slender tropical shape had long gone for he was now about twice the size with which I associated him. We had good times together. I note that Col rose to the rank of Commodore in the RAN.

Alan “Lofty” Hunt was in our classes. He was married, so his interests were elsewhere at leisure times. He was a relatively old salt at the time and had transferred from the Sick Bay with a few

yarns, one of which I remember. It went something like:- This high-ranking medical officer-in-charge, I forget his name, reporting on an operation that he had just performed on a nameless matelot, was – “Operation successful, Patient dead.”

Basil “Dood” Balme was also in our classes. He had academic attitudes but I can recall his performance on the evening of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, which I had endeavoured to conceal, until a telegram or two arrived. It was in between the two courses when we were back at Cerberus for the intervening period. I well recall the cold pork chop, which was the main dish for the evening meal. Once the birthday was revealed, it was time for a celebration. A clear recall is Basil sitting up in his hammock, with his partial plate out and frothing at the mouth from the cake of soap he was eating. If Basil is listening he may not appreciate these comments. After the War, he went on with his studies to qualify in Geology, I believe, gained his PhD, and he was doing research in palaeontology, and no doubt lectured at the University of Western Australia.

Peter Weedon was a lad from Western Australia. I do not recall him later at HMAS Watson for the Radar course but on one occasion we had some spare time and went onto the roof of the Melbourne Tech, where three of us climbed up the aerial tower, maybe 10m high, and sat on the small platform just below the aerials. With some reluctance, Peter followed but was a trembling mess when he got to the top. I cannot recall how we got him down. He would not have enjoyed climbing to the top of the mast of a Corvette to service the “bed-stead array” up there! I found it an interesting observation site.

Several others joined us at “Watson” in Class 6 when we were doing the Radar part of our training. One lad, can’t recall his name at the moment, was obviously courting a lass back in his hometown in Adelaide. He seemed to be under the thumb as, when he was frequently late with his weekly letter, he would catch a midnight tram from Bondi where we were living, to post his letter “on time” at the GPO. I wonder if they married and who wore the pants? I’m pretty sure he was Don Badman.

I enjoyed the stay at HMAS Watson. We had a few free days before our Radar course started and spent them precariously perched, out of sight, high on the cliffs in the glorious sunshine overlooking Sydney Heads and surveying our future Tasman Sea home and beyond. Lofty Hunt had preceded us to Sydney, probably to find a home for his wife and self and fortunately he found a home for four or was it five of us, not far up the road from Bondi Beach. The landlady looked after us well with dinner, bed and breakfast and from there we explored Sydney and became familiar with its attractions.

Our postings for the real life came out and I was destined to “stand-by” Corvette HMAS Kiama which was in the final stages of construction at Evans Deakin Yard, just downstream of the Storey Bridge in the Brisbane River. Our Radio/Radar class group was disbanded, we parted and our friendships were broken but not forgotten and we probably lost our familiar nicknames; mine was “Kanga”.

Our Skipper on the Kiama was Sam Benson, a very capable, skilled and logical sailor. He maintained a happy crew and the relationships have continued since the War. He later became the Labor Member for Port Melbourne or was it Williamstown. On one occasion he invited my wife and me to join him at Parliament House Canberra where we occupied privileged seats on the floor of the House during a Parliamentary Session – a choice memory. Sam was a man of high principles; he disagreed with the Labor Government’s policy on Vietnam, I think it was, and was subsequently expelled from the Labor Party. However, he contested the next election as an Independent and won well, so his qualities were valued beyond his Naval acquaintances.

We did our preliminary trials in the calm waters of Moreton Bay before the big test on our maiden run to Sydney. I was never very comfortable in heavy seas and with many of the crew, mostly teenagers and early twenties, we experienced the rigours of sea sickness. I am certain that the old familiar dance floor on our first night in Sydney was in sync with the deck of the Kiama.

At Garden Island, I reported that our 286, the Radar with the bedstead array atop the mast, was



not working well. The heavy coax cable that ran up the mast was taken down and given the heat treatment but to no avail. I believe our 286 never earned its keep, despite help at times from other experts.

Our “shake-down” trials then took place in Broken Bay, upstream from the mouth of the Hawkesbury River, NSW. Our “Jimmy”, second in charge, was Lieut Bill Folk. His job seemed to be to bond us as a team and “knock us in to shape”. His efforts contributed to developing happy and loyal friendships lasting for the next two years and beyond. I was still a rookie at those shake-down trials and I think Bill Folk may have found me a bit of a problem. I had my “hook”, lowest of the non-commissioned ranks and living in the Seaman’s Mess. I sensed that Bill was constrained from giving me menial tasks like scrubbing the decks, and yet I needed to be initiated. Leading Seamen (one “hook”) were old salts and needed no breaking in. Other technical staff, like our Artificers, were Petty Officers and thus had their own Mess. On one occasion, I was given an early morning exercise to row in our life-boat – but I enjoyed that. Another episode in Broken Bay was when we set the bush on the hillside on fire whilst doing gunnery practice. A team was despatched to put the fire out. I live on the Central Coast now – contemplate the outcry if a similar exercise was conducted today!

I made a very fortunate choice on our first night on board when we each had to select a spot to sling our hammock. I chose the outer spot under the Port Wing of the Bridge. The fresh air and sea breezes enjoyed from there were conducive to a good night’s sleep. It was also fairly close to the Radar operations room – room is a gross overstatement. I slept there throughout my time on the Kiama, including the last night at Garden Island when I was the lone person on board. It was the eve of handing the ship over to Garden Island for decommissioning.

The person who occupied the in-board and only other “sling” under the wing of the Bridge was Radio Telegraphist Foster “Foz” Williams. He was a good mate and I well recall a game of Aussie Rules on Thursday Island and kick-to-kick whenever we could get a good spot ashore. One such spot was at Torokina on the

west coast of Bougainville Island. After the War, Foz’s prowess as an Aussie Rules footballer became well known throughout Australia. He captained Port Adelaide and also South Australia in the “State of Origin” matches. He coached Port Adelaide for many years; his son Mark is following in his footsteps. In 2001 my wife and I were touring in the Flinders Ranges and I had a plan to call on Foz; it was 55 years since we had bid farewell. Sadly I was told that Foz had died a few weeks before and that he was held in such high esteem in South Australia that he was given a State Funeral.

I sailed every nautical mile of the Kiama’s voyages and was the last of our crew to be on board when she was handed over at Garden Island in early 1946. As far as my technical duties were concerned, I had then, and still have, a philosophy that says “if it works, don’t fix it”. I had a reasonably charmed life as our A272 (others may correct the names I give these Radar sets) gave a sterling performance and I was rarely disturbed in my hammock, slung under the port wing.

I should add that some of my comments and the names I use are mostly from my memory bank, which may not always be reliable. However I have access to the “Monthly Letters of Proceedings by our Skipper to The Secretary, Naval Board, Melbourne” to confirm and modify my comments. Quotations from these Letters are in italics.

To recall a few incidents:- We were steaming up the eastern coast of New Guinea, near the border of (now) West Irian, when I got a shake and advised that the Radar had gone crazy and was recording multiple echoes ahead. I inspected and advised that all looked real. By this time Benson would have been on the Bridge, so he ordered a starshell, think that’s the name, to be launched ahead. The Radar was proven to be right as we illuminated a number of Invasion Barges, which proved to be friendly.

Radar played an important and useful role when we joined the ships escorting the fleet, mostly American, as several coastal areas of New Guinea and adjacent Islands were captured. Hollandia and Cape Gloucester come into focus,



places where we witnessed the utter devastation of all forms of life, including many Japanese.

Shortly after the fall of Hollandia, (now called Jayapura) which is not far north of the boundary of Papua New Guinea, “*we anchored in Hollandia Bay with about 100 other ships. There were red alerts at 1900 and 2040 and spasmodic distant A A fire*”. “*Leave was granted at every available opportunity. Ship’s company was landed at Hollandia*”. Those two quotes are from The Monthly Letter of Procedures – May 1944; which was the mandatory reporting by our Captain to The Secretary of Naval Board, Melbourne.

I was one of about six of our crew who had that run ashore in Hollandia. Six was about the limit that could fit in our motorboat. We landed on a beach, unarmed except for a dog, which was illegally on board. The poor dog had not seen a post or tree for so long and at the sight of so many defoliated palms still standing, he went berserk and we never saw him again. I assume he is still AWL. Having gone inland till it was time to return to the shore we were met by a couple of armed Yanks on patrol. They were amazed to see us and all with our white headgear. We were given advice that we were lucky to be alive.

This photograph of the damaged Mission Church at Hollandia was taken by one of our Radar Operators, not long after the Yanks accosted us on our run ashore. I picked up poor quality counterfeit paper and coin money in Australian currency in the grounds around this Church. It was my thought at the time that the Japanese who had just left the area, or been killed, probably thought that they were already in Australia.

In early September 1944 we took about 100 Commandos on board at Lae, PNG – they occupied most of the space available on the Upper Deck. Our mission was to land them at Jacquinot Bay, New Britain before dawn the following day; the area was believed to be occupied by the Japanese. We were under-way all night in “*heavy south-easterly monsoonal weather*” when in the early hours of the morning I was given a shake to check the Radar as it was “*giving false information on the land “echoes”*”. Jack Haskel was in control on the Bridge at the

time when I reported that all seemed in order with the Radar. Sam was no doubt summoned to the Bridge and the navigation check revealed that we were not where we thought we were and we were now late for our pre-dawn target. Full steam ahead got us close to the Heads at dawn and the loyal Coast Guard Lieutenant Black and his Natives were up amongst the palms on the western Headland. I recall seeing his flashing light as he guided us on. It was a tense time but there was no action as we sailed into the Bay and dropped anchor. The Commandos went ashore and Lieut Black came aboard with his “wild” Natives. They were a wild mob alright and Sam Benson advised us to give them anything they wanted. Their main need seemed to be paper for smoking so all the old newspapers came out of the lockers. Lieut Black was reprimanded by the Senior Army Officer still on board, for not wearing the regulation clothes to protect him from mosquitoes. It is my impression that Black soon left afterwards with his Native troop, somewhat disgusted with the command. Lieut Black was a very brave man. I understand that his troop would enter Japanese camps after dark and slit throats. Shortly after our visit, Sam Benson reports that the Japanese cut the feet off the Natives who assisted Black at that time. A few months later, the PNG newssheet, which sometimes came to our Skipper, advised that Lieut Black had met his fate. My respect for the man remains firm.

After a few days the Commandos reported that they had discovered evidence that the Japanese had vacated Jacquinot Bay, probably the day before we arrived.

Remember the IFF, “Identification Friend or Foe”? We were forbidden to do any work on it but if we were at risk of going down or being overtaken, it was my duty to blow it up. It was used in conjunction with the 286 – earlier reported as being pretty useless. I assumed it was triggered by an aircraft within visible range! However, one evening as we were carrying out a bombardment on the shores of Bougainville Island, under the observant eyes of a spotting RAAF aircraft, the Pilot broke the silence to advise “*your cockerel is not crowing*”. So perhaps our IFF never worked either!

Another interesting episode was in mid July 1945. On 16<sup>th</sup> July 1945 we had a night's watch in *"Central Bougainville Strait for the purpose of intercepting enemy barge traffic between Bougainville and Shortland Islands."* The Japanese were reported to be running barges across the Passage and a seaplane at times landed in the early morning. Our assignment was to carry out a Radar search and to engage the enemy, as appropriate. The night was dark and stormy and as no evidence came up on the Radar screen, our Skipper decided at *"2123 to anchor off Moila Point in Bougainville Strait (having penetrated a probable enemy minefield) on account of continuous heavy rain and lack of visibility"*.

On the following morning we *"weighed anchor and proceeded towards Blanche Harbour..."*

Again on *"19<sup>th</sup> 1500: Departed from Blanche Harbour... for the western entrance of Bougainville Strait. 2000: Entered a probable minefield and carried out search for enemy barges."*

*"20<sup>th</sup> 0600: When in the vicinity of Moila Point, steering engine became defective and instead of stopping when twenty degrees of starboard wheel was applied, it continued and jammed in "hard to starboard" position. By stopping the port engine and going full ahead on the starboard engine, it was found that the ship could not be stopped from turning to starboard in a circle with a final turning circle with a diameter of approximately 600 yards.*

When day broke, being still in the minefield and within of enemy guns on Moila point, Kiama was unfortunately in a somewhat awkward position.

*0715: Repairs were effected to the steering gear and course was set for Blanche Harbour.*

*No fire was experienced from Moila Point, although the enemy was in a very favourable attacking position"*.

Though it was essentially a Radar search exercise which rendered no success in that field, it was a memorable occasion. It is my opinion that the Japs probably judged us a decoy.

I understand that 48 mines were swept up in the Moila Bay area at the end of the war although I have no official evidence to confirm this.

The only problem I had with the A272 Radar was an unserviceable generator. It was located on the Petty Officers' deck, just outside the CPO Stoker's cabin, which recalls another story. We made several visits to Seadler Harbour, Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands. On one of our shore excursions we came across a large collection of human bones. Assuming they were of the enemy, a few skulls were picked up. (It is with some reservation that I refer to this incident). Our CPO Stoker was our oldest crewmember; we named him "Snowy". He had a skull, which shared his cabin for a while with the intention of making it the feature of a reading light. A bad nightmare changed his mind and he tossed it out the porthole. Another Stoker negotiated a deal to swap his skull for a bottle of whisky with a crewmember of an Oil Tanker to which we were tied as we took on fuel. The Tanker was almost empty so its upper deck was probably 10 metres above ours. The deal was agreed and the bottle of whisky was lowered on a long rope. Just after the skull was tied in the place of the bottle, our fuelling was completed and order was given "Let go". Our engines were engaged and we sailed away. Our Stoker cut the rope and retrieved the skull. I witnessed that event and privately hoped that we would not be required to fuel from that same tanker again.

We were in Rabaul Harbour at the time of the surrender. I was detailed to visit a Jap Radar Station in the hills north-west of Rabaul. I accompanied a Radar Officer from a larger HMAS ship. We travelled in a jeep to some high country, which reminded me of the Blue Mountains at Katoomba. We had a Japanese interpreter who spoke good English. The site was underground so the Lieutenant and driver went off to inspect the equipment and I was left in the jeep with the interpreter and a revolver and I was instructed, "not to fraternise with the Jap soldier". We had a good old yarn. He was a very nice, decent chap and was longing to get home to his wife and children. The stupidity of war!

We had a few sorties whilst in the Rabaul Harbour. I climbed the active volcano on the

eastern Headland and ventured into the tunnels made by the Japanese into the inactive volcano on the western Headland. One tunnel lead us to a workshop where I acquired a number of useful tools as well as quite a few radio components. Apart from a useful box and a unique adjustable spanner, these items have been dispersed within my family.

Shortly after the surrender we were on our way to Manus Island from Rabaul, along the east coast of New Ireland for the first time. We called in to Kavieng and a landing party was put ashore, well armed this time, as the Japs there may not have received news that the War was over. True to their behaviour, our party made contact with the Japs and confiscated all the Samurai swords they could lay their hands on as well as other valuable personal items, much to the chagrin of the Army when they arrived later. But by this time we were sailing north. There were not enough swords to go round our crew so a ballot was held and I won a sword. It has been passed on to a member of our family who has a propensity for old things and may value this piece of information.

Some time in 1944 I received my second hook and was inducted into the Petty Officers Mess. I recall a Radar Officer coming on board to assess my suitability. His only question was to ask me to describe the function/action of the "Buggery Bar". I had not understood this when we had a brief lesson on it back at HMAS Watson. I think I gave him an honest answer and suggested that he explain it to me. I got my second hook anyway.

Life in the PO's Mess was more comfortable. Commissioned Officers could only visit if invited. I never saw any of them on our deck. Up to midday, when I had no "real" duties, I could remain in the Mess and spent many an hour playing mah-jong with an "off-duty" Stoker PO. After noon in the tropics was "stand-down" for the "off duty" Watch so we gathered on the fo'c'sle to sun-bathe. A particular mate was PO Stoker Johnny "Square Deal" Poulter. I used to visit him occasionally in the Boiler Room, which was the ideal location for drying my laundry. On one occasion in Torokina, Bougainville Island, I was visiting Johnny when the bells began to ring. Every time there was a change of speed decision made on the Bridge it would ring the appropriate

message in the Boiler Room. The person in charge would adjust the flame to meet the demands of the Engine Room as well as control the smoke emission. On the occasion in question the bells rang continuously to which it was impossible to respond. After some frustration, Johnny threw his arms in the air and gave up. I ventured out on to the deck to see that we were "coming along- side" with some hesitation. The problem was that Harry Godden was having his first full control at this exercise, as he was about to replace Sam Benson as our Skipper. Sam, I think, was recently promoted to Lt Commander and was about to go to higher duties. Harry Godden in later years skippered his own yacht in the famous Sydney to Hobart competitions.

On Christmas Eve 1944 we were in Sydney when a merchant ship was torpedoed south of Sydney. I quote from our Captain's Monthly Letters of Proceedings

*"Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> – 0500 Ship's Company recalled from leave and steam raised. 0952 slipped and proceeded to render assistance to U.S. "Robert J. Walker" in latitude 36° 32' S. longitude 150° 45' E. 2340 Arrived off "Robert J. Walker", investigated vessel which was well down by the stern and awash to the midship house. 2400 H.M.A.S. "Quickmatch" arrived and under his orders commenced patrolling off the wreck.*

*Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – 0300 "Robert J. Walker" sank. 0520 Closed Quickmatch who was rescuing survivors from lifeboats and rafts. 0800 Proceeded to Latitude 36° 28' S longitude 150° 44'E in accordance with instructions received from Captain (D) 4<sup>th</sup> D/F in H.M.S. "Quilliam" to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. "Yandra". 1835 Closed H.M.A.S. "Yandra" & proceeded to patrol between Montagu Island and Green Cape. 2300 In accordance with instructions received from N.O.I.C. Sydney altered course to 350° and commenced a searching sweep along the 50 fathom line towards Sydney.*

*Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> – 1400 In accordance with N.O.I.C. (S) instructions increased speed and proceeded towards Sydney with all despatch to complete loading refit stores for Port Adelaide. 1900 Secured alongside H.M.A.S. "Stuart" at Garden Island."*



I quoted that detail as there is some dispute that we were the first RAN ship to the scene. At the time, I can recall homing in on the ship in distress by its Radar image and I have a clear optical memory of seeing half of the ship out of the water at 90° to normal. I also believe that I viewed it by a starshell put up by Kiama. It was my concern at the time that we did not go searching for survivors but our Skipper's report puts that to rest.

In hindsight I have only one regret that comes to mind. I had lots of spare time in my two years at sea on the "Kiama" and it was a time when I could have done correspondence courses on subjects of interest.

After discharge mid 1946, I returned to my clerical position in the Commonwealth Public Service, on "higher duties" - read more pay - but with little to do and I found the general attitude to work by those about me, not to my liking. So with very little advice available, compared to today, I enrolled on the spur of the moment, to take a Science Degree course in Physics at Melbourne University, under the Rehabilitation Scheme. It was a hard slug at the time but I gained a Cadetship in Geophysics a year later, so my future program took on a realistic shape. My radio/radar training in the RAN had predetermined my direction.

On reflecting now, in my 24<sup>th</sup> year of retirement from the workforce, I believe my time in the Navy was good to and for me, then and since.

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## Reg Labone

1. I spent almost 2 years training as aircrew in the Royal Air Force from June 1942 to May 1944 before transferring to the Royal Navy in May 1944.

Events of 1944 to 1949

2. I then attended the Northampton Technical College in London with other Navy men doing a 20 weeks Radio course. It was a very exciting period for London was being bombed daily by V1

rockets (called 'buzz bombs' by everyone). These rockets travelled at a height of about 1,000 feet and at a speed of about 400 knots. They were pilotless missiles. About 8 or 10 passed us each day, several flying past, but several exploding nearby. As we sat in the classroom we would hear the roar of the planes, then, as often happened, the engine would cut out and the 'buzz bomb' would then dive steeply and land on a building below exploding. As the engine cut out, the whole class would leap under desks, and stay crouched there until the explosion finished. These pilotless 'buzz bombs' were fitted with a pole in the nose to allow the bomb to explode at ground level, and they wreaked havoc with windows. Thousands of windows were shattered, and the tinkle of broken glass could be heard for several minutes as the blast travelled along many roads, then gradually faded away.

There were also several V2 rockets landed randomly over scattered parts of London, but these were erratic, and the Germans did not know where they landed. They would streak about 30 miles high, then rush to ground at a speed that made them unable to be heard until after they had landed. They made a huge crater in the ground – over 100 feet deep, and the Government explained them as "Gas Main Explosions". These attacks gradually lessened as the Allied troops on the continent gradually over-ran the firing points in France and Belgium.

3. At the end of the Technical course I was drafted to Douglas (HMS Valkyrie on the Isle of Man) for about 5 weeks to do my first Radar Sets. They were type 291 and type 284/5/M3/P4. Douglas is situated in the Irish Sea about 80 miles seaward of Liverpool. There were a few hundred German prisoners held there. The Douglas Promenade had a dozen or so holiday homes now surrounded with barbed wire, and within were hard-line German prisoners, mainly airmen or U boat survivors who passed the time away. They were unspoken, sullen and spent their days just smoking or gazing out to sea. I didn't see any guards. Escape was impossible. They were 80 miles from land, and barely spoke to each other. I think most of them were probably ex Hitler Youth.

They were quite different from the general German prisoners who were spread all over Northern England and parts of Scotland. These Germans were glad to be out of the war and worked as prisoners at nearby farms. They lived in huts and hostels, and each had a bicycle. They wore brown and yellow patched clothes, and each day after breakfast they would cycle to work at their farms until about 4 pm, when they would cycle back to their huts for tea and bed. They were happy men and could often be heard whistling tunes as they cycled by.

From Douglas I was then posted to HMS Collingwood which had become a huge Radar Training Establishment (it still is), and here I learned several other radar sets including, the 79B, the 281B, the 271Q, and the IFF sets 242, 243 the 251M and the 253P. It was a very intensive course which lasted 12 weeks. During this time the German War finished (about 8 May 1945).

4. In July 1945 I received embarkation leave, then joined the troopship RMS “Maloja” in Liverpool, to travel to Australia where we were to join the British Pacific Fleet. En route as we left Colombo we learned that the Japanese had just surrendered (on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945), and so now the war was over.

5. However, our troopship carried on to Fremantle, then arrived in Sydney about 1<sup>st</sup> September 1945. In Sydney we were told to find civilian billets and myself and a mate found fine rooms, on Campbell Parade, on the sea front at Bondi Beach. We had a friendly landlady named Mrs Ferguson, and settled in to a routine where we caught a tram to Central Railway, then caught a Lilyfield tram to the Radio Test Room at Leichhardt each day. This Radio Test Room had about 100 R.N. Radio Mechanics, also about 50 W.R.N.S. (female Radio Mechs). It had an O.I.C. named Gordon Power, an RAN Lieutenant Commander, also several British junior officers. Life was good. We had breakfast at our lodgings, we bought lunch and left for home about 4pm. We went to the British Centre, a big building in Hyde Park. Here we had a lovely salad meal, with bread rolls and cups of tea, then a pineapple or peaches and ice cream, all for the cost of 1 shilling. Sydney was a lovely city and we enjoyed

it immensely. There was a big dance floor of polished wood and a dance every night attended by about 300 girls (hostesses). Most of the girls wore sweet smelling frangipanni blossoms in their hair – a lovely exotic touch. The dance would end about 11 pm, then the floor was cleared and mattresses and palliases were spread on the floor, so up to several hundred sailors could sleep there at no cost. It was really great. This routine continued as we worked at the Radio Test Room each day.

6. In November 1945 I received a draft to the escort carrier HMS “Reaper”. She was one of about 5 escort carriers built in the USA. Other sister ships were HMS Fencer, Scorchers, Speaker and Striker, and they had served as part of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm in the Pacific. HMS Reaper was a fine comfortable ship and was fitted with the USA Radar type SG and air warning type SK. Reaper then sailed to Hong Kong via Manus Island. She was laden with foodstuffs, office furniture and trucks. Hong Kong was then a dilapidated backwater. It had no commerce and little food, and was in dire straits indeed.

I returned to Sydney on the “Reaper” and 1 month later my demob turned up and I joined the cruiser HMS Suffolk for my return to UK. En route, I decided to volunteer to remain in the Navy for a further 12 months. Therefore, when I arrived at Portsmouth, England in February 1946 I was posted to Port Radio Portsmouth for a further 12 months service.

7. At Port Radio I was now a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic and had a busy time. I spent most of each day travelling by boat across Portsmouth Harbour to HMS Dolphin, the submarine depot at Gosport. Here I worked on “T” boat submarines – HMS Trump, HMS Trenchant and HMS Tactician which were doing refits. They were fitted with 2 band Radars called 267MW – yellow (low band) and blue (UHF band), with 2 modulators and 2 aerials. I carried out basin trials, and then sea trials on the submarines as they progressed. I also did some trips to Southampton to work on some merchant ship Radars. I also worked at the Navy Boys Training establishment HMS St. Vincent, working on their 285s and their teacher unit HRB



8. At March 1947 my Naval engagement expired and I was demobbed. Now a civilian I wondered about my future, and so I enrolled in a Resettlement course at a Wireless College in Manchester, and began a course as a Merchant Ship's Radio Officer. The course lasted 6 months. At the finish I graduated then applied to the Marconi company for a job. They told me there was a waiting list for a few months, so I then applied to the civil airline (British European Airways) for a job as a Radio Mechanic. I was accepted and so began work at Speke Airport Liverpool as a Radio Mechanic. Thus I settled down and the job was well paid so I gave up the thought of joining a ship when it came up. I worked there until 1948, when I saw a newspaper advertisement for ex RN men to join the RAN for a 6 year term, with payment of a 120 Pounds gratuity at the end. I immediately applied and at January 1949 I found myself in Plymouth and I joined HMAS Sydney for her working up trials in UK, before we sailed for Sydney.

This was to become my career. I served in the RAN for 15 years, and finished my Naval career on 19 January 1964.

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## Bob Linton

Robert Harriman Linton joined the RAN on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1942. Bob's service history reads as follows:

- \* HMAS Cerberus New Entry 5/3/42 to 2/7/42, orientation and "square bashing"
- \* HMAS Lonsdale 3/7/42 to 28/2/43. Basic Radio training.
- \* HMAS Cerberus 1/3/43 to 24/3/43 Loran DAS-2 course and in accordance with CNO 582/201/1073 of 29/11/1940 was transferred to the RAN as Wireless Mechanic with O/N 26465
- \* HMAS Cerberus 26/3/43 to 28/3/43 Acting Leading Wireless Mechanic
- \* HMA Naval W/T Station Canberra ACT.17/4/43 to 16/4/43

\* HMAS Rushcutter 17/4/43 to 18/9/43, Watson Radar course

\* HMAS Kybra 19/9/43 to 9/11/43

\* HMAS Yandra 10/11/43 to 25/3/44

\* HMAS Yandra, promoted to Acting PO Radio Mechanic 26/3/44 to 15/2/45

\* HMAS Glenelg 16/2/45 to 8/3/45

\* HMAS Australia 9/3/45 to 25/3/45

\* HMAS Australia, confirmed as PORM 26/3/45 to 24/4/46

\* HMAS Watson 25/4/46 to 3/7/46

\* HMAS 4/7/46 to 22/7/46 Leeuwin for demobilisation

Here are some of the more notable events during Bob's service career.

Following his square bashing at HMAS Cerberus, and prior to commencing his radio training, Bob did various ship's company duties such as guard duty, and observation duty for target practices with Corvette gunnery sea trials in Port Phillip Bay.

Bob joined RAN 5 Class on 3 July 1942, and graduated from the Melbourne Technical College (MTC), later Royal Melbourne Technical College (R.M.I.T.) on 28 February 1943. During the training period, Bob and his classmates were billeted at HMAS Lonsdale at Port Melbourne. Daily Monday to Friday they were transported from Port Melbourne to the MTC on the back of an open tray (no sides or top cover) 3 ton Chevrolet lorry. On the vehicle's tray were two mess deck forms, where 15 to 20 RM's sat back to back, enjoying uninterrupted views of Melbourne city sights, and savouring the bleak wet and cold weather. This vehicle was powered by gas derived from a "Gas Producer", a device which ingeniously created a gas suitable for firing an internal combustion machine, using charcoal as its prime energy source. Gas Producers were common vehicular attachments in those war days of extremely limited petrol

supplies. Despite the complete lack of concern for the passengers safety or comfort, there was never an accident involving injury to any of the many RMs who were transported in this manner, 10 times each week for the 26 weeks of their training.



*The then Australian High Commissioner to UK, S.M. Bruce inspecting the Radar Division HMAS Australia in Plymouth Sound UK, Sunday 1 July 1945. L to R: PORM Bob Linton, PORM Bill Johnson, PORM Frank Bedford and PORM Alan (Doc) Hunt.*

Lunch while at MTC was a visit to either the Red Shield hut, near the corner of Lonsdale and Elizabeth Streets, or the American Red Cross.

Returning to Lonsdale after a day at MTC, the classes fell in with ship's company Dogwatchmen, and were marched to the drill hall by the PTI for exercises. After supper, which was piped at 1800 hours, it was back to study, and again the class was marched to the drill hall. Because of the security nature of the training, notes were forbidden to be taken from the MTC after the day's study. To help students retain the information imparted during the day's lectures, each evening back at Lonsdale, revision classes were conducted for two hours by Instructor officers such as Warrant Schoolmaster Haydn "Beau" Guest (note 1). Then it was time to sling hammocks and pipe down at 2200 hours.

There were no weekend duties for the RMs undergoing training, but this was valuable time to attend to matters such as dhobeying, writing letters home, playing cricket or football, and going on picnics with girl friends!

On being transferred to Sydney for advanced technical training, Bob found that not only was there no vacant accommodation for his class at HMAS Rushcutter, but also there were no spare instructors or class facilities to allow the training to take place. At this time, Rushcutter, the base station and Watson (North Head), the radar installation site, were bursting at the seams with training demands.

To satisfy his need for a bed, Bob and class mate Alan Archibald looked for B&B private facilities, and found an obliging lady living in Double Bay who for an agreed sum, provided both of them with beds, breakfast and use of the laundry. So that was that problem solved.

For the two weeks they had to occupy their time until the training facilities became available, they whiled away their time each day, sunning themselves under the cliffs around Watson's Bay.

But eventually, the life of Riley came to an end, and it was into the mysteries of the new fangled secret weapon RDF (later Radar).

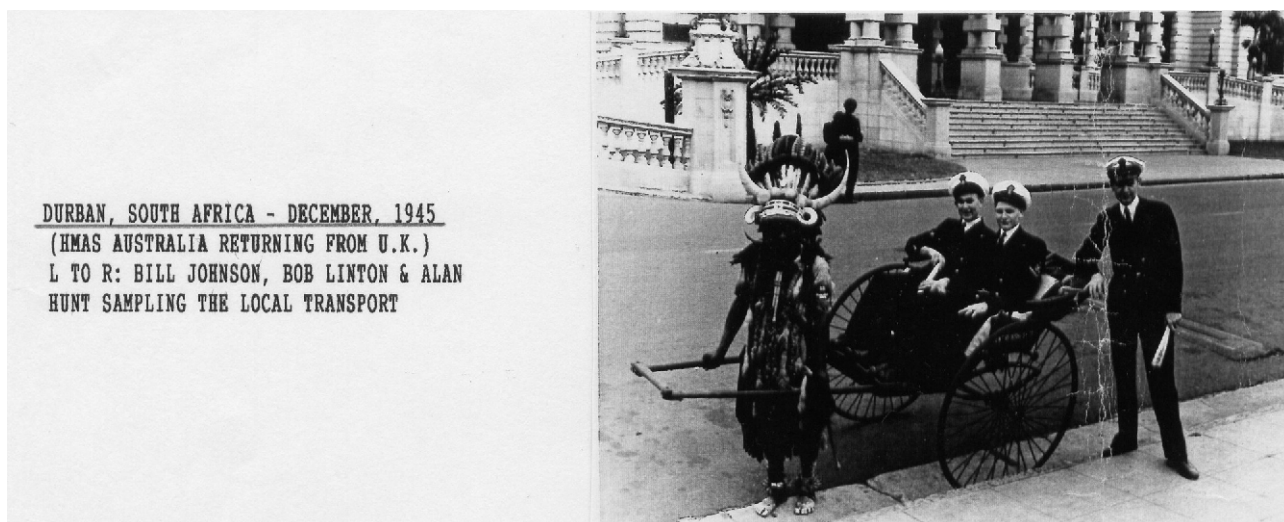
On completion of his training, Bob was drafted to the ship HMAS Kybra. Pre war, SS Kybra had the unenviable task of picking up sheep from various little ports on the coast of Western Australia, for transport to the Fremantle slaughterhouse. Taken over by the RAN for war time service, HMAS Kybra was fitted out with a type A79 Radar set to be used by Bailey Boys for performance assessment. This ship did convoy work on the east coast between Moreton Bay and Port Phillip Heads, performing valuable escort duties as well as affording practical training for the embryonic Radar Naval Officers.

Bob was then drafted to another ship Yandra (note 2), which is reputed to have been responsible for sinking a Japanese midget submarine prior to Bob joining her. Yandra's role was as a training ship for Radar Plotters, the gunnery seamen who operated the radar. To

facilitate this, the ship was fitted with a class room, and had 2 instructors and 2 radar mechanics full time support. As well, she was equipped with the more advanced radar models A286 forrard and aft, A272 forrard and E271 aft. This latter was soon replaced by A276. This model was a prototype made by AWA, and the ship was assigned to one convoy trip to Milne Bay for acceptance trials before the decision was taken to fit A276 to all Corvettes. Both Kybra & Yandra were also armed with a four inch gun forrard, depth charge gear aft, and anti aircraft cannon port and starboard.

Having proved his worth as a Radar Mechanic during his 18 months in Yandra, Bob was then drafted to the Corvette HMAS Glenelg, and was responsible for fitting and making operational, the first A276 radar to go into service in Corvettes. HMAS Glenelg also had an air warning set, the A286.

attacks and Japanese gunfire hits during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the Battle of Lingayan Gulf. By having this draft, Bob was fortunate in that he was not aboard Glenelg when she took part in the Luzon Philippines landing, when so many ships were the target of the Kamikaze pilots. This was at the stage of cessation of hostilities in Europe, but with the Pacific War still being bitterly fought. HMAS Australia suffered heavy damage from the Kamikazes, and was in need of upgrade to its radar systems. It was decided that the best location for this was UK. Thus between June and December 1945 Bob spent his time in the Plymouth Naval dockyard. The old 281 air warning equipment was replaced by the 960. The SG, colloquially known as Sugar George surface radar used primarily for navigation was replaced by the 293, and the gunnery control systems of 282 and 285 were also installed.



*Taken in Durban South Africa while HMAS Australia was returning to Australia following Kamikaze attack repairs at Plymouth. L to R: Bill Johnson, Bob Linton and Alan Hunt. Chauffeur's name not known*

When asked about his Wireless Telegraphy (W/T) experiences in comparison with his radar experiences, Bob remarked that he hardly ever had occasion to attend to a fault in the radio transmission equipment, the transmitter 21/22J. The reason was that no ship's officer would risk a Court Martial by breaking radio transmission silence at sea, and therefore, the W/T transmitters got very little use.

From HMAS Glenelg, Bob was drafted to HMAS Australia, the ship which suffered Kamakaze

Returning home via South Africa to Sydney, Bob was drafted to HMAS Watson, thence to HMAS Leeuwin for demobilisation from active service on 27 July 1946.

#### Notes

1. Haydn Guest was a school teacher pre war. He joined the RAN in 1922, and served until 1957 when he retired with the rank of Instructor Commander.



2. See page 74 “Its Nothing to do with Me, I’m Radar” by PRH Watson

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## Reuben McDonald

### *An early account of the beginning of RDF (radar)*

I joined the navy in March 1942 having been the radio technician at the station 4AY, Ayr, Nth Old. I am the holder of a PMG broadcast station operator’s certificate of proficiency.

I entered the first class in radar being held at HMAS Rushcutter. I was made an acting petty officer. The class consisted mostly of the Bailey bays from Sydney University and others. A uniform of sorts was issued to me and I received the holy service number of SV150. This course in radar went on for quite a number of weeks and at the time I was billeted to private accommodation. We were known as wireless mechanics, and the non commissioned officers were detailed to take turns at Watson’s Bay at the South Head Army allocation to the Navy of a section called Port War. This housed a loop detection setup between the North and South Head of the harbour to detect vessels and subs entering the harbour. We four wireless mechanics took turns of this duty at night.

On the 1st June 1942 we detected the midget submarines entering the Heads. There was a boom net across the harbour between Watson’s Bay and Middle Head. The 2 channels either side of the harbour had drop nets to allow shipping to progress up the harbour. A Manly ferry and a small freighter were allowed to pass the southern side channel and this is where the submarines were able to get into the harbour.

What we detected were 5 submarines and this was reported to Navy Base headquarters but it proved to be only 3. From recent Japanese history 2 of the 5 subs were the Mother subs dropping off 2 of the midget subs. That is a night I shall never forget as the target for the subs were the cruisers USN Chicago and the HMAS Canberra.

One of the midget subs had been caught up in the boom net and was unable to get free. The submarine that fired the torpedo at the ‘Chicago’ had surfaced off Bradley’s Head and fired its torpedoes. As the sub was turning, the torpedoes passed either side of the ship with one hitting the eastern side of Garden Island exploding underneath the ‘Butterbur’ which was being used as a dormitory for sailors. 21 lives were lost but many did escape. The other torpedo ended up on a beach area on the western side of Garden Island. At the time, the ‘trigger happy gunners’ from the Chicago were firing at the conning tower of the midget sub. Harbour petrol boats were dropping depth charges and were able to sink the third sub off Taylor’s Bay. The ‘Chicago’ immediately prepared to leave the harbour due to the attack and this was at about 2 am in the morning. It is presumed that the sub that fired the torpedo was able to leave the harbour through the boom at the same time, as it has not been found to date.

Work had started at South Head above the army barracks on a well fortified building on the cliff edge to house the first radar equipment for the Navy. A fibro building was under construction near the fortified building to house classrooms and an office for naval staff. This was under the control of HMAS Rushcutter.

After completion of my radar training I had to do the naval entry training course at HMAS Cerberus which was situated at Western Pork Bay (Fiinder’s Naval Base).

On returning to HMAS Rushcutter in August 1942, Watson’s Bay Radar School accelerated the building work at the grounds above their army barracks. It was a goat track up to where the work was being performed. The first officer in charge of the Radar School at the time was a Lieutenant Strange RANR. He was of the diamond gold braid and RN background. He was also in that second course bailey boys’ officers. A photograph was taken at HNM Rushcutter of these officers with Beach Road, Rushcutters Bay in the background. This is the group I did my training with.

As accommodation was in very short supply in the navy I received an outside allowance and

took up lodgings at a private home near the old post office off the park across from the Watson's Bay Hotel. My duties at the Radar School at the time were training the young radio mechanics from Melbourne after technical training there in radio theory of repairs and operation of radar equipment. Some of the training of operators was conducted here. At the time we were receiving quite a number of personnel from other branches that were being trained in the radar department mainly from the wireless telegraphy department and the torpedo department. To name a few, Neil

Piermont (WT) was our first round rig Petty Officer in the Radar Branch" Wally Haines, 'Hutch' Hutchinson, Maurie Gallon and others. We made up the first instructions in the technical training and repairs of radar equipment. My first contact with Senior Warrant Officer John Gloury was in the 1942-43 period when he arrived at Watson's Bay as all the staff rooms were taken up by other officers. He had a desk in a hallway as there was no where to put him. This is where he conducted his work. 'When I think of it, he was treated badly by senior officers at the time and this was noted in Lofty Watson's book, "It is nothing to do with me (sir)' I'm radar.

The radar setup at Watson comprised the early English type 271 which had manual training antennae. This was a 10cm radar. This was viewed on an A scope. Switching the trace to different ranges in yards for enabled measurements of detected echoes received. There was an air warning type English 281 and this operated around 85 MH and also the early A286 Australian Radar Set which used a bedstead antennae. On the cliff edge we able to follow it for some considerable distance out to sea. In the demonstration room some broken down ex RAAF and naval radar equipment was laid out for demonstration purposes for the training of radio mechanics.

During my time here I was involved with scientists from the CSIRO physics laboratory at Sydney University where development of antennas of stacked arrays suitable for use in RAN Naval, vessels- We were doing field tests on lobe patterns to obtain information far

estimating height of incoming aircraft to the ship.

In 1943 I met my wife Mora at my relative's apartment in Bondi Beach. We became engaged and were married at St Marks church at Darling Point.

The first casualty in the radar department occurred on 20/7/43 when HMAS Hobart was torpedoed in the Coral Sea north of Noumea. Sub Lt Parkin RANR. He was an early 'Bailey Boy'. I was at Watson when the ship returned to Sydney. On one turbine and listing at an angle of almost 40 degrees with a large hole beneath the quarter deck it was taken up to the Cockatoo docks for repairs. During this time Watson was expanding and more fibro building were being built to accommodate the intake of new radio mechanics for training. There were still no facilities within the depot for accommodation and meals. For a time lunch facilities were made available to us from St Peter's church at Watson's Bay. We were having great trouble with power failures at Watson with blackouts occurring as the radar equipment we were using was using a 10cm English radar operating on 180 v. 500 cycles and rotary converters from 220v. DC as used on ships at the time and 50 cycle 240v. through DC 220v rotary converters therefore we needed a 3 phase 415v. rotary converter to 220v DC to run this equipment.

We had to install a marine type diesel engine to drive a 220v. Generator to enable the equipment to run.

We were loaned a mobile 240v. single phase generating set from the army to keep the depot running while the blackouts were on. Most of this trouble occurred in 1944.

During this time the dock at Garden Island was under construction with one of the embankments on the western side being called Burma Road. Entry to Garden island was still by boat only. During this time my wife Mora was pregnant with our first child, David, and I was living at Bondi Beach where my duties were of a roving nature. I sometimes taught at Watson's Bay or Garden Island where I worked with various officers in setting up radar equipment or



on field work with the CSIRO. During October 1944 the HMAS Australia had been damaged in the bridge area from kamikaze aircraft requiring repairs to antennas and replacement of radar equipment. The ship had been taken to the Island of Espirita Santo which is just north of Noumea in the Coral Sea. I was detailed to be one of those flown there by RAAF Catalina flying boat from the RAAF Base at Rose Bay, However my wife Mora, had become very sick with toxemia (AKA pre- eclampsia ) and was hospitalized at the Royal Women's' hospital, Paddington and at the age of 24 I was very devastated and applied for leave to be with her. This was granted and my groomsmen friend R.M. ( H.O.) Neil Piermont replaced me on this duty. He wasn't very happy about this arrangement at the time but we still remained friends. After 3 weeks our son David was born 3/12/44 and both mother and baby did well.

My son David will be 60 on the 3/12/04 and works as an oral surgeon in Busselton WA. With HMAS Hobart having such extensive repairs at the docks on Cockatoo Island I was transferred to the dock yards for work in installing the latest radar equipment. Due to the most secret nature of this work dock yard employees were not allowed where the equipment was being installed and this work was conducted by radio mechanics like me.

I was still registered on the HMAS Rushcutters books on an outside allowance- I had to travel by tram to St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst and then walk from there through King's Cross to Garden Island passing the docks under construction to catch a work boat to Cockatoo Island docks to the HMAS Hobart. I worked mainly on the microwave radar sets and other installations in the radar operations room. Lt. Bumside was the officer in charge of the radar on the ship and Captain Dowling was the C.O. of the ship. It was then requested that I remain with the ship and responsible for the microwave sets that had been fitted. The ship left for Jervis Bay where we anchored off HMAS Creswell (the old naval college). Overnight more shipping had been lost due to Japanese submarine activity. It was decided in a hurry that we return to Sydney the next day and hasty plans were then made to carry out the trials in Bass Strait and Port Phillip Bay. During the time of the refitting the ship had

been fitted with the first PPI display and we had excellent display of Port Phillip Bay and shoreline from the centre of the Bay also we had a skyatron fitted in the radar operations room. This was fed from our air warning set 281 and also height estimations were fed into the plotting room of aircraft. Because of the heat in the operations room generated by the skyatron this room was the only area on the ship that was air-conditioned. The ship performed well except the trials in Bass Strait were not very comfortable because of the speed and zigzagging of the manoeuvres. One problem we did find was that there was insufficient 220vdc to run all the rotary converters for all the RC operated radar and other electronic equipment and thus the auxiliary generator had to be operated. After weekend leave at Port Melbourne we returned to Sydney. After a short break in Sydney we sailed north up through the Coral Sea to the Admiralty Islands to join up with the US fleet that the Australian squadron was attached to. This was at Seeadler Harbour on Manus Island. While there, a stream driven turbine DC generator was taken on board to increase the overall 220vdc power, This was carried out by the shipboard engineering staff. Whilst there the HMAS Australia arrived from the Luzon area of the Philippines after being attacked by kamikaze aircraft. The bridge area was heavily damaged and many casualties had occurred. She returned to Sydney for dockyard repairs. The Hobart then proceeded to the Philippines to join up with the rest of the fleet to carry out with the liberation of the Philippines which is an area of numerous islands. We arrived at the Lingayen Gulf area where the fleet was using Subic Bay as a base. Our air warning radar set 281 was relied on by the whole fleet as air warning of enemy aircraft as we could at times detect aircraft up to 300 naut. Miles and also because of the low pattern from the 281 antennae we were able to estimate height and this was necessary for intercepting aircraft to prevent them attacking the fleet.

Land fighting was occurring all across the island. We entered the Manila Bay one week after it had been captured but were unable to go alongside due to a large number of ships that had been sunk there. Only their funnels and masts visible above the water. We had to anchor offshore and were taken to Manila in landing barges. The city was

terribly damaged. After this short visit we returned back to Subic Bay and our next move was to Cebu Island. We carried out the capture of Cebu city with the aid of many ships and aircraft carriers which took place before dawn and was finalized by midday. From here we returned to base at Subic Bay. It was continuous work keeping all our radar working, We had a lot of trouble with high voltage transformers in the display units. This was due to the high humidity moisture content.

In Subic Bay we had a US navy repair ship where we could have transformers rewound and proofed against humidity. During this time we were detailed to participate in an invasion force acting as artillery for the landing of Australian troops at Wewak in PNG. This was carried out during the day, and at night we would steam away from the coast with the heat being unbearable. I was unable to sleep below deck I slept on an American fold up canvas stretcher under a sheet on the upper deck however one night I was nearly frozen with a tropical downpour and had to rush with others for cover in the hot steamy interior of the ship.

On completion of the landing we traveled back to Subic Bay in the Philippines. Food was not the best on board as the supply ship could (not) keep up with our movements. At one stage the cooked rice was full of weevils and the meat supply was not the best and every thing else came out of cans or was dehydrated. We had a breakout of 'Delhi belly' (gastroenteritis) and almost everybody was affected. The sick bay staff was working overtime to cope with this sickness. We were able to get better supplies from the Americans and everyone gradually recovered.

The next move was to the south to participate in the Australian landings in Borneo. On passing the last of the Philippines islands we participated in the liberation of Tawitawi. The Japanese were trying to escape the island in boats and barges and no mercy was shown to them if they did not surrender. We had two aircraft carriers with us that gave us air cover.

The first landing that we made in Borneo was at Tarakan. We started bombarding the landing site at midnight to give cover for the Australian

troops who commenced landings from barges from the beach. There were heavy casualties amongst the Australian troops which was due to the Japanese having made tunnels in the hillside where they could bring out their artillery to fire on the landing troops. One of my old mates from the Fingal Surf Club of Fingal Head was killed in that landing. From here we participated in the landing of troops at Brunei. Our air warning radar proved to be very effective when we acted as air guards for the fleet and in particular at night. Japanese aircraft gave the information of height, range and direction to the American Black Widow night fighters which were then able to intercept before the raiders could reach the invasion fleet. Our next action after this event was at Balikpapan in the Makassar Straits on the eastern coast of Borneo. Our supply of six inch gunnery shells were dropping at an alarming rate and we were just beyond the breakers to the coast firing at various targets from information supplied by spotting aircrafts ahead of the advancing landing force of Australian troops. After this action of two weeks we had to make the long journey in a zigzag manner from here to the Admiralty Islands to pick up ammunition.

We were traveling at high speed and on one of the nights we picked up an our radar torpedo boats coming at high speed towards us. It wasn't until they got into close proximity that we were able to contact them on RT as to who we were and what our mission was. After returning to Subic Bay we were only involved in one incident where three Japanese cruisers were trying to escape along the Vietnamese coast north back to Japan. We set out on the early hours of the morning from Subic Bay traveling at high speed of 30 knots across the South China Sea, It was amazing to see that many US destroyers could not keep up the pace. Black smoke would escape from their funnels and they had to pull out of this charge. By midday long range bombers and torpedo aircraft were able to sink the Japanese cruisers and we then returned to Subic Bay.

The atomic bombs had been dropped in Japan and they immediately sent out a request for peace. Japanese envoys came down to Manila from Japan to discuss surrender. The whole fleet

in Subic Bay became active for peace as all American ships were alcohol free and consequently our ships became the area for celebrations! It was then that the whole fleet was directed to assemble in Tokyo Bay for the 'signing of the peace'. When we arrived there it was the largest gathering of naval ships I had seen and we were not anchored far from the Missouri. This is where the Japanese came aboard to sign the 'Peace Treaty'

One thousand piston engine aircraft flew over at that moment which made the ceremony more memorable. The return to Sydney took two weeks and made us the first ship to return from the 'signing of the treaty'.

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## James (Jim) McDonnell

PO RM(S) 26152 - R.A.N.

Following is a verbatim copy of Jim's personal log during the period 7 November 1944 through 29 September 1945.

7.11.44. Sailed from Sydney on MDV Charon. 36 hours from Sydney now into terrific storm. Made very little progress.. Rest of journey past Willis Island to Milne Bay uneventful. No ships sighted for 7 days.

13.11.44. Great sight going through China Straits 4.am. We passed by Iama, Gamadota Gilly Gil to Milne Bay. Stayed one day. Came back through Samarai thru Coral Sea to Port Moresby.

15.11.44. Arrived Port Moresby. Meals terrible on Charon. Visited Wonga wireless station some 7 miles out. Also Angau native camp.

19.11.44. Visited Fishermans Island. Great beach with lovelywhite sands. Water beautifully tepid. Made trip in Bargo. Weather very hot. Stayed at Port Moresby until 27<sup>th</sup>

27.11.44. Drafted to Madang Port Moresby W/T workshop. Clsoing down.



Melbourne Technical College 17 RAN Class 1943. Photo taken on top of the College. Standing L to R: John (Jack) H Fisher, James (Jim) M McDonnell, W. (Bill) Charlton, GW (Greg) Risdale, Grant S Lawry, E (Ernie) J Morrison, KL (Shorty) Wells, Instructor R (Aspro) Asbornsen, John D Baird, Peter C Batchelor, WP Phil Thomas, JC Charlie Hogan, Instructor E Brighthorpe, Squatting L to R: Keith (Doc) E Taylor, TW (Bill) Summers, Ray (Pincher) R Martin, Sydney (Syd) H Jarvis, P (Phil) V Garrans, Reginald (Reg) E Mannell, John (Jack) L Bayly, Peter Barry Price.

28.11.44. 8 am. Went aboard RAAF Mariner flew over Owen Stanley passed over Kokodatrail looks great from air. Mountains very rugged. Great sight. Came over to coast at Merauke. Followed coast up to Madang. Beautiful sights with lots of islands 11 am arrived at Madang. Very lovely sight from air. Acres of plantations with large dispersal area.

18.12.44. At Madang drafted to HMAS Bingera Meios Woendi (aka Mios Num)

19.12.44. Went to mainland, hitched to within a few miles of Alexhaven to Deslandes Oval to see Navy & Army footy match. Army won 13 points. This one dedicated to late Cpl Deslandes killed in action 6.12.43. Hitched back to Madang per RAAF motor tender. Must visit War Cemetery one day if possible. 2 Japs captured on air strip. Jap plane over at midday opn 28.11.44, probably from Wewak area. Some 40,000 Japs still there. Seen barges leaving at night for Commando raids on Hansa Bay coming home at daylight. Weather very oppressive. Plenty of dysentery around. One case of malaria.

22.12.44. Packed kit and went aboard HMAS Corvette Gympie at 9.30 am (Time International time) Sailed at 6 pm towing barge. Slow work. Tow line broke 4 am next morning . 4 hours lost.

23.12.44. Still at sea. Pretty sick.

24.12.44. Nothing to report.

25.12.44. Xmas day. Arrived in Hollandia at 11.00 am. Dropped pick and had Xmas dinner of turkey and plum duff with 1 bottle of beer Castlemaine 4X. Pretty good. When away Feeling OK now. Some 600 ships in harbour awaiting the landing at Luzon. Many English D Day vessels there. English minelayer Ariadne 47 knots. Great sight these sights. So many ships. Like St Kilda at night with so many lights

26.12.44. Sailed at 10.00 am to Saidor which we passed next day fastly leaving N.G dutch NG not so rugged as further south. Passed through many coral island straits. Arrived past Island of Japan

27.12.44 9 am. Came into Meios Woendi at 12 o'clock. Came alongside HMAS Bungaree. Put gear on board. Very nice here . More like southern weather with a cool breeze with tropical nights interspersed with the usual nightly rain. There are many atolls around with only one entrance. Great naval base. 200 fathoms of water. Yanks here in force with MTBs. Can see Biak with its drome. 100s of planes in air going to rain Amboina Celebes. Liberators, Lightnings, Bostons, Fortresses. Some great sights to see so many planes in air at once. Had some air raid alerts nothing doing though. Often go ashore to Yank picture show. A show each night pre-release films

31.12.44 & 1.1.45. Went to pictures tonight. Saw old year out with fire works display by American MTBs on island wharfs – all 178 of them. Full moon. Nice Bombers' moon. Nothing doing generally.

3.1.45. Trip to America workshop ship Griffin. Radio workshop one of the best. Everything that opens and shuts.

4.1.45. Visited "Ararat". Met Jack Cations old Werribee boy now Radar Mech.

5.1.45. Went aboard "Barcoo" a frigate. Met Bruce Watkins Radio Mech. Nothing much today. Quiet. Done some dhobeying to catch up on things

6.1.45. Boarded "Lithgow" and "Katoomba". Met Bluey Symons and Ray Williams. Had afternoon tea. Both Radio Mech. "Katoomba" had plates dented with depth charge explosions. Swan and 3 corvettes. Went to Bombard

7.1.45. Nothing doing.

8.1.45. Same today. Mail situation terrible.

Went aboard "Latrobe" before she left next day for Adelaide

10.1.45. Visited "Gladstone" today. Vendetta came in from down south. Very warm too.

11.1.45. Very warm today. Harbour very quiet.

12.1.45. Nothing doing.

13.1.45. Visited "Kapunda" & "Swan" Saw Dan Bowden Chief Tel.

14.1.45. Very quiet, Few ships in harbour

15.1.45. Visited Wilcannia to reprovision ship

16.1.45. Visited "Ararat", "Rockhampton", "Wilcannia". Saw Jack Cations Chas Perry.

17.1.45. Through 20.1.45. Working on "Cootamundra".

21.1.45 & 22.1.45. Nil

23.1.45 Visited "Swan" & "Gladstone"

24.1.45. Nil

25.1.45 through 27.1.45 Visited "Gladstone"

28.1.45 Nil.

29.1.45. "Kapunda" & "Strahan"

30.1.45. "Kapunda".



31.1.45. Nil	26.2.45 through 28.2.45. Working on "Deloraine"
1.2.45. Quiet.	1.3.45. Paid £4 . Only drawn £8 since Sept 1944. No papers yet.
2.2.45. Nothing doing very much. Vendetta gone to Madang via Hollandia to escort "Platypus" which is due in any day now.	2.3.45. Working on "Deloraine"
3.2.45. Visited "Kapunda" & "Colac". Quite few ships in today Falie Radar Repair ship arrived. Falie departed for Madang	3.3.45. Working on "Kapunda"
4.2.45. Quiet day.	4.3.45. Quiet day. Bashing the spine.
5.2.45 & 6.2.45 went on "Colac"	5.3.45. Working morning on "Plats" afternoon on "Cootamundra"
7.2.45 & 8.2.45. Nil	6.3.45. Working on "Cootamundra"
9.2.45. Joined Platypus Meios Woendi.	7.3.45. Working on "Cootamundra". Captain's Requestmen for 1 GC stood over until Service Papers arrive.
10.2.45. & 11.2 45 Working on "Swan"	8.3.45. Working on "Deloraine".
12.2.45 Working on "Plats" & "Swan"	9.3.45. Working on "Cootamundra".
13.2.45 Working on "Plats"	10.3.45. Very quiet today.
14.2.45. Working on "Gympie" Gympie shortly going south.	11.3.45. Resting. No divisions
15.2.45. Working on "Ararat"	12.3.45.& 13.3.45. Working on "Gladstone"
16.2.45. Working on new workbench HMAS "Platypus" measuring extension	14.3.45. & 15.3.45. Working on "Platypus". Air raid warning.
17.2.45 Ashore on duty Meios Woendi American Wireless Section with Jack Cations Wireless Mechanic (S)	15.3.45 Drew another £4. fitting new workshop.
18.2.45. Bashed spine today. First for 6 weeks.	16.3.45 Working on "Plats" morning. Afternoon "Corowra"
19.2.45 and 20.2.45. Working on "Kapunda".	17.3.45. St Poat's Day. Working on "Plats".
21.2.45. Checking stores on "Platypus"	18.3.45. Sunday Divisions. To Mass at Meios Woendi.
21.2.45 & 23.2.45. Working on "Townsville"	19.3.45. Working on "Plats" hence "Gumleaf"
24.2.45. Working on "Gladstone".	20.3.45. Working on "Gumleaf"& "Kapunda" inspection
25.2.45. Negative divisions. Just sleep. Very extra dinner turkey. Great change from "Ye old bully"	21.3.45. Working on "Kapunda". Air raid warning.

22.3.45 Working on "Kapunda"

23.3.45. Working on "Kapunda". Air raid alert.

24.3.45. Workshop & "Bingera"

25.3.45. "Gumleaf" & "Bingera". Air raid alert.

26.3.45. "Strahan" & "Bowen"

27.3.45. Working on "Bowen"

28.3.45. Working "Plats" workshops. Air strip bombed New Guinea

29.3.45. Working on "Bowen"

30.3.45. Good Friday Nil. Job on YW84, an American water tanker. PO RM Bruce Alston sent.

1.3.45. Workshop Platypus. "Gladstone" & "Bowen" tied up alongside Plats for service.

1.4.45. Easter Sunday.

2.4.45. through 7.4.45. Workshops "Platypus"

4.4.45. Air raid warning

5.4.45. Also visited HMAS "Glenelg"

6.4.45. Air raid warning.

7.4.45. Also trip to "Bundaberg"

8.4.45. Sunday arrangement made to take on coal in preparation for trip to Biak to pick up new Commander Logan

9.4.45. Visited HMAS "Mildura". L/Tel Marriott from Canberra also Ern Morrison Radar Mech.

10.4.45. Left Meios Woendi for Biak and Soridor. Arrived Biak 12 o'clock and Soridor 12.45 pm. Very nice trip. Tons of aircraft, very busy airstrip. Planes coming and going every few minutes.

11.4.45. Guests of RAAF at Biak. Left "Platypus" 2.30 pm motor cutter. Landed at

Liberty Boat wharf. Met by RAAF trucks and were driven to places of interest on the island. All ships were visited. Planes of all sorts were seen Liberators Douglas Air Masters, Thunderbolt, Bostons, P38 Lightnings, Kittyhawks. One deep hole in the coral well inland was visited - scene of Japanese Hospital. This place took 13 days to take. It was only taken by pouring tons of petrol into it and lighting it. Another similar hole was visited and this was the scene of very bitter fighting. The scene of the first tank of battles was viewed some broken Jap tanks and Gen Grant tanks were still by the side of the road. The cliffs are sheer 100 – 150 feet high. These mounted 6 inch Jap guns when the Americans began their landings another landing had to take place further up the beach not covered by these guns. Japs are still being hunted down each day and night patrols are in action brought 3 lone Japs in this morning. The American cemetery contains 8,000 dead Americans lost in this landing. "Duntroon" was in with 9<sup>th</sup> Div on way to Morotai.

13.4.45. Workshop "Platypus". Rigging aials for AR8/AT5 35 feet. Making soldering lugs for aerial & earth connections. Connecting link from ACU to receiver.

14.4.45. Workshops "Platypus". Running earth wire for AR8/AT5. Making lugs and sweating joints in same Testing output transformer T13 pin 2C Receiver from "Cootamundra" An open in the primary side exists. New one required as nil available here. Testing RC8 in workshop as receiver is dead. 2 valves replaced V9 1L5G. Also BFO valve V8 replaced. New resistor R34 of 750 T ohms replaced with one 200 T ohm 1 watt. Now voltage = 60V. Condenser soldering on pin 5 which is coupling condenser for V8 & V9. Xmitter section is still out. Will not load

15.4.45. Sunday. Mass today and HC (Harry C was always fishing over the side. Can't recall his surname). Some food fish caught. Had fish for tea for mess.

16.4.45. Working on "Wagga". Met Frank Farrell PO RM (HO)

17.4.45. Working on "Cootamundra"

18.4.45. working on "Kapunda" & "Platypus".

19.4.45 through 21.4.45. . “Platypus” LRM on “Bowen” Birthday (mine). Repairing divers Amplifier. Went to pictures Captain Menlove had a word to say to ship’s company on the last day of being skipper of “Plats”. Would be on our way to Biak Wednesday to pick up new skipper Logan and 1<sup>st</sup> Naval Member would address us on the future movements of ship

22.4.45. Sunday Mass Meios Woendi fishing with grenades, not very sporting

23.4.45. Working on “Plats”. Air raid red 1.30 am.this morning. Nothing doing.

24.4.45. Working on “Plats” getting ready to sail today for Biak. May get orders ofr ship’s future movements tomorrow from 1<sup>st</sup> Naval Member at Biak on his return from Morotai.

25.4.45. Left Meios Woendi for Baik at 0700. Arrived Biak 0930 hours.

26.4.45. At Biak. Very hot. Things fairly quiet

27.4.45. Left Biak 1500 arrived Meios Woendi 1750 hours. Nothing much.

28.4.45. Working on “Cootamundra” going to Borneo. I was still working on her when sheput to sea – Tx on the blink. Trip to sea on asdic sweep for sub reported outside boom. Negative results. Also on “Plats” workshop

29.4.45. Mass at Meios Woendi

30.4.45. Workshops “Platypus”. All quiet.

1.5.45. “Bathurst” & workshops “Plats” News from Borneo.

2.5.45. Workshops “Platypus”. Things pretty busy today

3.5.45. Workshops “Platypus”. “Junee” arrived today. Things generally quiet. European war last legs. Great

4.5.45. Workshops “Plats” Very busy. Overcome all outstanding faults.

5.5.45. Workshops “Platypus”. Nothing extra today

6.5.45. Sunday nothing doing today on stand down. Spent on fo’cle and spin dits. Bruce Harry Moss and I.

7.5.45. Workshops “Platypus”

8.5.45. Victory Day. Pipe Down.

9.5.45. V + I worked all day things grim. Tons of work.

10.5.45. Working on “Latrobe”. Fire in W/T office.

11.5.45. Working on “Platypus” Getting ready to leave for Morotai on 12.5.45.

12.5.45. Left Meios Woendi on route to Morotai at 8 am. Sea Calm. Extra good trip so far

13.5.45. At sea en route Morotai. Weather fine. Crossing the line ceremony at 2.30 pm . Great day. Heavy rain at night

14.5.435. Arrived Morotai 11 am after uneventful but nice trip and crossing the Line ceremony at 2.30 pm today. Great show. Plenty of ships in harbour. Kaminble, Manoora, Rocky Mount large W/T ship which has Tx on approx 26 circuits. Was in Hollandia on Xmas Day 1944. Went to correct anchor some 5 to 6 miles down coast or bay and finally tied up at 2.30 pm. Very heavy rain on previous night

15.5.45. Nice breeze today with light rain. Plenty of shipping in the harbour.

16.5.45. Went ashore 9am to Morotai to pick up wireless equipment. Had good trip around the perimeter which the allies hold by various cars, trucks etc. Covered in all some 50 miles around the perimeter. Thousands of Aust soldiers and airmen. Went to 1<sup>st</sup> TAF (Tactical Air Force, Spitfire Group) RAAF to get valves etc. Generally had good day. Rained pretty hard at times. Arrived back on board at 5.30pm.

- 17.5.45. "Platypus" quiet day today. Chief Tel Danny Bowden arrived back from leave in Sydney.
- 18.5.45. Workshop "Platypus" General duties today. Mostly clerical work
- 19.5.45. Workshop today. Nothing very much today.
- 20.5.45. Sunday divisions. Plenty of rain.
- 21.5.45. "Plats still. Things quiet. Plenty of rain.
- 22.5.45. Things quiet. 3 letters from home.
- 23.5.45. Still nothing much doing. Rec'd cake and papers.
- 24.5.45. Tons of work. Fault on AR8/AT5 on Compass platform
- 25.5.45. "Platypus" plenty to do. Jack Cations over for scan. Social visit
- 26.5.45. "Platypus" things quiet today. Good for sleeping too?
- 27.5.45. Mass & Holy Communion today On board shifting ship 1 & ½ miles closer into Moratai
- 28/5/45/Visited "Kanimbla" in company with Ken Wilson Radio Mech to see Loran in action. Very impressed with what I saw. Great possibilities for navigation by radio. Arrived back on board 5.20 pm.
- 29.5.45. "Cootamundra. Ships massing in harbour for Borneo attack. 9<sup>th</sup> Div. arriving
- 30.5.45. "Cootamundra". Plenty of work. Still more ships arriving for the Borneo invasion
- 31.5.45. Still on "Plats" at Moratai. Very hot and sultry
- 1.6.45. Still extra hot. Ships going away in their various convoys to Borneo
- 2.6.45. "Platypus" Ships still going away in convoys for "X" day in Borneo
- 3.6.45. Sunday. Trip to Mass but no luck ... Mother's anniversary (death)
- 4.6.45. Great sight today. Convoy sailed for Borneo Landing. Hundreds of ships. "Rock Mt" wireless ship, Manoora, Kanimbla, Westralia, 30 destroyers Fletcher class. 70 LCI & LCTs
- 5.6.45. "Platypus" More Large convoys left this evening for Borneo
- 6.6.45. Still on the "Platypus". More reinforcements arrived. Harbour was empty previous. Weather good. night
- 7.6.45. Very much off colour today. Did nothing much.
- 8.6.45. Feeling very much improved today. More ships for reinforcements arriving.
- 9.6.45. "Platypus". Things quiet. Feeling much improved.
- 10.6.45. Went to church on MTB mother ship "Culebra" Island. Very nice efficiently run ship and clean.
- 11.6.45. Still on "Plats". Word received of invasion in Bruni Bay Borneo.
- 12.6.45. Working on "Plats" Very wet & wintry conditions.
- 13.6.45. Working on "Plats" Still no mail. Weather has been very rainy No visibility.
- 14.6.45. "Platypus". Had news from home... Mavis (wife) has been operated on. Doing fairly well in reports from Gwen. Many ships with 7<sup>th</sup> Div in harbour. 3 Assault ships returned and Trompf (Dutch destroyer) to harbour
- 15.6.45. Working on "Plats". Weather very rainy. Awaiting news of wife.
- 16.6.45. Coaling ship from Racpolar. Dutch ship. Things quiet. Plenty of ships in harbour
- 17.6.45. Sunday. Coaling ship still. Also went to Mass and Holy Communion. Shropshire in Harbour today.



- 18.6.45. Working on "Plats". Things quiet. Plenty of ships massing for next invasion of Borneo...HMN Trompf in port.
- 19.6.45. "Platypus". Very warm today. Nothing much doing. Plenty of bombing raids on Balikpapan Borneo
- 20.6.45. "Platypus" Ships still arriving for next invasion. Most of Aust Navy in port here.
- 21.6.45. "Platypus". Very hot today. Still more ships arriving. 7<sup>th</sup> Div loading LST & LCI. USS Phoenix class cruiser in. "Colombia"
- 22.6.45. "Platypus". Nice and cool today. Nothing very much doing.
- 23.6.45. "Platypus" Air raid alert 0420. Hundreds of ships left today on first stage to Balikpapan.
- 24.6.45. Sunday. Unable to go to Mass. 3 bombs were dropped astern of us previous night. Still plenty of ships in now for the big event.
- 25.6.45. "Platypus". Things quiet.
- 26.6.45. "Platypus" Ships left in great convoy for next landing in Balikpapan borneo.
- 27.6.45. "Platypus". Still more convoys leaving for Balikpapan. More rain too.
- 28.6.45. "Platypus". Still more ships leaving in convoys.to Bruni. All corvettes out for shoot today.
- 29.6.45. "Platypus". Dicky action station run for the big effort on Monday. The harbour practically empty now. All ships away on the invasion of Balikpapan.
- 30.6.45. "Platypus" quiet.
- 1.7.45. Sunday. Wintry conditions. Tropical mists. Unable to go to USS Culabra Island to church.
- 2.7.45. "Platypus". Fire damage control action staion dicky run. Rain.
- 3.7.45. "Plats". "Wagga" alongside. Things going quiet.
- 4.7.45. "Plats". Ships returning from Balikpapan invasion with wounded and to reinforce etc.
- 5.7.45. "Plats" Nice day. Ships still coming in for reinforcements to Balikpapan Borneo. Duke's visit cancelled due to death of Mr Curtin
- 6.7.45. "Platypus". Still more rain. Tons of it now.
- 7.7.45. "Plats" and "Jon Jim" an offal barge this thing installing new diesel.
- 8.7.45. Sunday. "Plats" Things quiet. Nice day more LSTs & LCI coming back for reinforcements to go to Balikpapan
- 9.7.45. "Plats". Things quiet. Corvettes and Frigates out for HE shoot towards Halmeheras. Big convoy left today to destination?
- 10.7.45. "Plats" More of the convoy returned from Balikpapan. Cool today.
- 11.7.45. "Plats". Nothing much doing. Bombing of Halmaheras
- 12.7.45. "Plats" Tons of rain. "Hobart" in today
- 13.7.45. "Plats". Fine today. Friday 13<sup>th</sup>!!! "Arunta" (had blown a boiler) arrived from Tawi Tawi Island en route to Sydney for refit. Tawi Tawi is a deep water small entrance harbour for Japanese capital ships, carriers etc
- 14.7.45. "Plats". Cool. Things quiet.
- 15.7.45. "Plats" Mass on the "Celebra Island", LCI's mother ship.
- 16.7.45. "Plats" Sultry but no rain.
- 17.7.45. Ashore at Morotai. Went ashore on AWB 410. Went to RAAF (1<sup>st</sup> TAF RAAF) about 11 miles out. Returned to 9RSU Spitfire squadron for spare parts. Many Liberators just arrived from China. Awaiting overhaul. Had good look at Spitfires. One Mk XIV 5 bladed prop on next strip.

18.7.45. Air raid 0315 this morning. No reports to hand of damage. Liberator crashed at 1130 am near ship. Still on "Plats"

19.7.45. "Plats". Pay day. Nice weather today . Air Raiders 2102 hours

20.7.45. "Plats". Quite cool today. 21.7.45. Negative.

22.7.45. "Plats". Duty today. Plenty of Liberators over Halmaheras. Spitfires also.

23.7.45. "Plats". Nice and cool. Another liberator crashed into the sea near us today. 2 in one week to crash.

24.7.45. "Plats". Things quiet

25.7.45. "Plats" Nothing much doing. Still plenty of Libs going on raids to the Halmaheras

26.7.45. "Platypus". Received draft to return to headquarters at Madang. Went to "Barcoo" today 7B54 on the nose

27.7.45. "Plats" Went aboard Three Cjheers. Fault in Txmmitter

28.7.45. "Plats". Handing over stores to relief PO RM Ken Wilson Everything a/cd for

29.7.45. "Plats" Worked today on hydrophone fom "June".

30.7.45. "Plats" Cool "Bungaree" due 1/8/45/ Air raid a;ert 11.30.pm

31.7.45. "Plats" Heavy rain. Nice & cool. Sentry shot through hand late last night.

1.8.45. "Plats" Packing kit. Finished up in workshop

2/8/45 "Plats". Completed packing. Awaiting "Bungaree" to finish discharging at main wharf at Morotai.

3.8.45. "Plats" still awaiting passage on "Bungaree". Things quiet in harbour

4.8.45. "Plats" did the "mad mile" and all ready to go aboard "Bungaree" as soon as she ties up alongside.

5.8.45. "Bungaree" still discharging cargo to "Plats" and MSL 701. Raining very heavily.

6.8.45. "bungaree". Sailed 7 am. Quite a good sight at about 8 am on way from harbour. Passed 2 American destroyers escorting into Morotai captured Japanese Red Cross ship which was taken near Timor with 1600 soldiers with munitions. Soldiers had bandages but were in perfect condition.

7.8.45. At sea on "Bungaree". Nothing doing. Ship quiet

8.8.45. At sea on "Bungaree". Overcast and cool. Crossed the line. Sighted land Biak and sighted the Merkur.

9.8.45. At sea "Bungaree" Nice & warm with wind. In sight of NG coast

10.8.45. At sea on "Bungaree". Passed Hollandia. Calm & cool.

11.8.45. At sea on "Bungaree". Should be at Madang 0600 tomorrow. Passed Wewak & Alexhaven. tonight. Buzz of war ending any time now?

12.8.45. Madang at 0630. Arrived ashore 1200 hours. Day very warm. Still no definite news of the end of the war.

13.8.45. Madang very warm. Things very quiet. Still awaiting news from Japan.

14.8.45. Madang. Still awaiting the surrender news. Passed confirmation exam for PO

15.8.45. Madang. News of end of hostilities came over at 0930. RAAF radio. Pipe down. Hands piped to dance and skylark by Commander Brooks and 3 cheers when flag broken

16.8.45. Madang divisions at 0930 and RC church party. Pipe down. Xmas fare 7 bottles of grog as celebrations.

17.8.45. Madang coolish today. Things quiet today after celebration. Good turn last night down on the point of Bellieu Island. All CB ratings. Many bottles of grog to be had

18.8.45. Madang. Went to mainland to footy. Navy v 7TMO. Went at night at invitation of RAAF sergeants mess to Tancred Island near by. Had good night. Met Kev Goodson from Preston Vic.

19.8.45. Madang. Nothing much doing. Went to mainland to His Majesty's Theatre (RAAF) to see Gracie Fields and company. Beautiful night clear sky and a great show.

21.8.45. Madang. Quiet.

22.8.45. Madang. Nothing very much doing.

23.8.45. Madang. Buzz, may go to one of new post defeat occupation forces Rabaul.

24.8.45. Madang. Testing AT14 for shipment with occupying force for Noumea and Ocean Island

15.8.45. Madang. Stores completed for occupation. Things otherwise quiet.

26.8.45. Madang. Quiet. Divisions and church

27.8.45. Madang. "Vendetta" arrived from refit in Brisbane. Left in PM?

28.8.45. Madang. Things quiet. Ships all loaded with stores to go to take over Noumea and Ocean Island from the Japs. Wanaka (stores ship) and Diamantina ready

29.8.45. Madang. Convoy for Ocean Island and Nauru Island left

30.8.45. Madang public broadcast organised for the Occupation of Rabaul.

31.8.45. Madang. Quiet.

1.9.45. Madang. "Vendetta" all loaded for Rabaul occupation.

2.9.45. Madang. Sunday. Divisions. "Katoomba" arrived 11 am. "Stuart" 0930 on way south. Armistice signed with Japan on USS "Missourie" Tokyo Bay 11.30 am.

3.9.45. Madang. "Stuart" left for south. "Katoomba" still anchored in bay.

4.9.45 through 12.9.45. Madang. Quiet. 11 cases of malaria. "Vendetta" arrived back from Rabaul after signing instrument of surrender with Japan.

13.9.45. Madang. Nothing doing. Some buzz parties going south?

14.9.45 through 25.9.45. Madang. Quiet. Nothing much doing. Trip to Alexhaven to ML 1347. W/T repaired. Played footy against "Vendetta".

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### Maurice Francis Pritchard

Maurice signed up in the RAN Reserve on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1944, and was assigned the official number of PM7860. At this time Maurice had qualified as a "Sparker" and held a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Wireless Operator's Certificate, so he became a Naval Telegraphist. He spent the next three months improving his Morse Code and typing proficiencies at the Flinders Naval Depot Signal School.

It was during March 1945 that he learned of a Radar Mechanics course at HMAS Watson, and he applied to the CO at Cerberus for a transfer. As he had good knowledge of radio theory his transfer was approved in April, and he joined a class of 5 others who were training as RMs. Accommodation at Watson was limited, so Maurice was billeted at Balmoral, and taken daily by to Watson by a steam boat.

All completed the course during December 1945 and were granted leave pending drafts to various ships. Maurice had the unusual experience of being drafted to not one but two ships, HMAS Echuca and Deloraine. These ships then spent much of 1946 minesweeping in tandem in the Rabaul, Kavieng, Solomons Islands area. While

serving in Echucha, Maurice kept himself busy doing extra curricular duties. Some of these were mailman, keeping the captain's stamp book, correcting all the ship's charts, minding the echo sounder, and even peeling spuds for the ship's company.

After a year in HMAS Ecucha, Maurice had an accident resulting in a broken finger. This gave him a lot of trouble such that he was sent to the Heidelberg (Victoria) Repatriation Hospital for surgery to trim off a sharp bone at the location of the fracture

This tour of duty finished at Christmas 1946, when Maurice returned to Melbourne to spend the next 6 months at Williamstown Dockyard. During this period he was living at home. It was while he was at the Dockyard that Maurice met up with some of the Torrens lads, Ross "Lofty" Watson, Bob Flower and Ken Donald.

Soon after, Maurice joined the RANVR and spent time at HMAS Lonsdale training Reservists until 1957. As a Reservist, Maurice reports that he enjoyed the various experiences such as a five weeks sea going voyage on HMAS Melbourne to New Zealand. Interestingly, after completing his training at HMAS Watson in January 1946, Maurice never again met up with any of his classmates.

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## Hilton (Tony) Ramsay

Tony joined the RAN on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1943 as an Ordinary Seaman 2, when he had nearly completed the New Entry course, unaware he had been recommended for S/Torpedoman, he decided to apply for the Wireless Mechanic course. Before being accepted he spent many nights at Officer Training Trigonometry classes and had to memorise the first 90 pages of the Torpedo Handbook, and then, 'against my better judgement', said the selecting officer, he joined 25 class for Wireless Mechanics at the Melbourne Tech.

He and three WMQ's shared a room at the YMCA. Unfortunately Tony contracted Scarlet

Fever and Pneumonia simultaneously and was sent first to Heidelberg then to Fairfield Hospital



*Part of the RAN Class 26 Melbourne Technical College 1944. L to R: Tom Palmer, Peter Gillespie, Hilton (Tony) Ramsay, Maurice McAully, Jim Dingwall, Neil (Tom) Gulson.*

for a long spell. On return no RAN courses were available so he joined 49A RAAF class until RAN 26 class arrived. From Canberra he was drafted to HMAS 'Moreton', Brisbane. The need for a WT workshop at the ML Base, 'Comeslie', was obvious. Lieut. Fitzgerald, the PWO agreed and for 15 months Tony serviced ML's AT5/AR8, HDML's TW12 etc. with a minimum of equipment. HMAS 'Moreton' had a Palec valve tester that required a separate layover card with the switch settings for each valve group. There wasn't any tester available for the ML Base. A newly arrived University Super Tester was the centre of a window display in Homecraft's store in Brisbane. All the valve settings were on a roller within the instrument and it worked on either AC or vibrator. Tony armed with a Navy requisition order fronted the counter and so 'the Display Only', 'one off New Model' was reluctantly given up to Tony and finally for his 25 pounds, he and the ML Base had a valve tester at last. His 'patch' was from Peter's Slip, Toowong, to Moreton Island where the Cowan Cowan signal station had a 3BZ. 'The Pile Light' that marked the channel entrance had a Briggs & Stratton Charger to service (note 2). The 'lighthouse' was a wooden octagonal single storey building elevated on steel girders resembling a present day oil rig. The 'landing' was a girder jutting out and when the wave lifted the boat Tony had to jump, with tools, then climb 40 ft. up a stairway. 'The Pile Light', once the



home of the two keepers, no longer exists, it was demolished by a ship sometime after the war. The Royal Navy arrived and the HMAML Base became known as HMS Furneaux. HMS 'Both', a seagoing tug, attached to the British Fleet had an ongoing unsolvable transmitter problem, worked on some bands not others. Tony was sent and would you believe, a short-circuit from earth to antenna (note 3)! He says, 'never give a mug an Ohmmeter!' The Port Wireless Office got the glory and Tony got 'Excellent Radio Mechanic' on his Service Certificate.

Drafted to Madang in Nov.1945 he finally left Brisbane after 5 attempts on a DC3 VH-CUM for Townsville. Next day it was on to Cairns to join a Sunderland Flying Boat to Pt. Moresby where, while the passengers were disembarking into a boat on the port side, a fire tender extinguished a fire in No.4 engine on the starboard side. Next transport was a Martin Mariner to Madang but in the Finisterre Ranges it hit an 'air pocket', turned on its side to drop like a stone, you can imagine what happened to the passengers! The pilot eventually recovered control to land safely at Madang.

The Radio Mechanics listened enthusiastically to the Christmas talk by visiting PM Ben Chifley 'you will be out of here by the end of next month'. Ben was right, down the coast 180 miles to Dreger Harbour. HMAS 'Tarangau' was their new home! Why abandon a good 'operating base like Madang? Could it be that many thousands of US troops still occupied the Finschhafen area that had taken on an air of permanency complete with a large US War Cemetery? Dreger was previously the base from which J.F.Kennedy had operated from in PT109. There were three 90ft masts to erect and transmitting station to build. Tony's workshop was an abandoned US icehouse next to the new building where they slept upstairs over the transmitters. The power supply came from twin Southern Cross diesel alternators that were housed 100 yards away which ran day and night.

The US Army had a basket ball court of reinforced concrete with open sides and fully roofed where 16mm movies were screened. The projector having a limited light throw was on a platform suspended from the roof, accessed by a

very long ladder. During the show the picture began to move in and out of focus, the droplights and the screen were swinging, the two projectionists left the machine running and skidded down the sides of the ladder. A GI shouted 'Earthquake', panic, everybody out, there was an almighty bang, branches fell off trees, the court building rose at one end and fell back. It was all over except on returning to the Ping Wo the ashen faced gangway guard described how the ship left the wharf (or vice versa) some 12ft limited by the mooring lines, to rebound slamming into the wharf. The earthquake reached from N.Z. to Japan. This basket ball court eventually became the RAN cinema with a fireproof projection box and twin 35mm projectors, a great improvement on the Madang cinema with coconut logs to sit on, no roof, and one projector stopping to change reels every 20 minutes. Tony was the assistant projectionist.

Being the only workshop mechanic, Tony was called to do a night job, (how about 1am) to Langemak Bay where ships took on water. A British LST303 for Hong Kong was leaving at 3am, it had a working set but its original Westinghouse transmitter was faulty. Nothing could be done in two hours so Tony left on the return trip. At 2am a swinging lantern along the road brought the jeep to a halt. A New Guinea native asked for a lift, OK? Yes- low whistle- 5 more emerged from the jungle fully armed with spears, clubs, betel nut etc. 2 jammed in the front seat, 3 in the backseat and one on the front mudguard. The jeep groaned under the load. This could be sticky! Not so, Tony stopped where indicated and with a 'thanks' they disappeared into the jungle near their village that was under curfew. Tony was on his way with one headlight and noisy exhaust thinking how the RAN5 jeep had deteriorated since he had last driven it. Back at the wharf all became clear. This was not the Communications Branch jeep RAN5 from the new depot, this RAN5 belonged to the Ping Wo's captain who had accepted a 9pm dinner invite to the US commander but had no wheels and not a jeep left in sight! To say he was upset would be an understatement. Both jeeps had been sign written by the same painter and were identical in appearance. Tony on Captain's Report - Let off with a reprimand. What a night it had been!

The US Army had a BC band station, 'WVTA The Voice of Finschhafen', to listen to during the day while at night the Australian commercial stations were loud and clear. The Americans were well set up with 2 way divided roads in Finschhafen and numerous 'beach houses' built out over the water. The US had staged one million men to New Britain through the area. In its 'hey day' it had cross streets numbered from Finschhafen, Nth.10 (limited by the Song River) to Sth.96 street, a total of 106 streets, each a complete camp. Even when the RAN arrived the US still occupied beyond Sth.24 Street. Here the coloured and Filipino GIs had their open-air cinema with side wings to the screen painted in bright orange with giant Negro figures in Zoot suits and dangling chains depicted on them. The RAN was always tolerated, but no white GI would go there. This was one of several US cinemas available until the RAN started up their own.

100 squadron RAAF was also present in some strength but the AIF was limited to 5 men of the 'Perth' telephone exchange who called themselves, 'The Forgotten Five'. The RMs had several happy evenings at their camp. Fishing with hand grenades they had a 44-gallon drum half full of fish cooked on a 'Choofer'. This was a closed-ended copper spiral tube with small pilot holes that vaporised the incoming fuel which was fed through a long hose from a petrol tank well away on a tree. The device got its name from the pulsating flare as each lot of gas fired.

The RAAF also had an open-air cinema that the RMs sometimes went to. One evening there was great excitement, one of the planes from Townsville brought in a WAAF, who became the only white girl in N.G. She attended the cinema under heavy guard and remained so until she was flown back to Townsville.

As the US Forces withdrew our relationship with the US deteriorated. 'Accidentally' the doors of the US Freezer holding all the depot's meat were left open. The RAN was hungry for a very long time. The US Army wanted to blow up the Mape River Bridge because they had built it after the original had been destroyed. The RAAF threatened to shoot the first person touching it, so the bridge survived. Some of the crew of the

visiting HMAS 'Condamine' did not improve the situation when they stole the US Marshal's favourite pearl handled 45 pistols while he was at a dinner party. No trace of the pistols could be found so the RAN flew a diver from Brisbane who successfully recovered the pistols from under the 'Condamine'.

Equipment was destroyed by Jap working parties with Filipino guards. Ammunition was brought in huge trucks driven by big Negroes to be loaded and dumped at sea by the barge full. Artillery shells were sometimes scattered along the roads having fallen from trucks. All the ammunition did not sink, mortar bombs in waterproofed cardboard tubes, floated in to litter the shoreline. A self propelled 'Bay City' Crane loading one of the barges toppled in, the tip of the jib barely visible under the water. That's it! Thought Tony. He underestimated the resources of the US. Several days later, in from the sea came a gigantic floating crane to fish the 'Bay City' out like a toy and put it on the wharf. An acre of mobile radar station trailers and unused automatic telephone exchanges, still in crates, were burnt, trucks and Jeeps were pushed into the sea from the end of the various wharves.

The Jap commander, in a white Jeep with white helmeted US MPs, had to salute as he was driven past while Tony walked. Not so the prisoners jammed in the trucks, they would have a spitting contest as they passed by safe from being punished, as there was no chance of identifying them. Their 'home' was a barbed wire and coconut trunk posted enclosure at Finschhafen. Finally the US War Cemetery was removed possibly to Guam and much later the adjoining Australian War Cemetery was moved to Lae. To his recollection, only a few men of the US Graves Unit remained.

The Government would have been pleased with the outcome!

Tony sailed in the 'Diamantina' on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1946, with an Air Sea Rescue launch in tow. In heavy seas in the Huon Gulf the harness slipped from the ASR tearing off its rudder and propeller, the ship returned to Dreger Harbour having travelled only sixty miles in 24 hours. After repairs to the ASR, the 'Diamantina' with the

ASR again in tow, sailed for Port Moresby, where some of the passengers or crew got drunk and were involved in a serious crime in the Papuan Hotel. Luckily Tony and a friend, while sight seeing, were invited as guests to the RAAF Officers' Mess at Jackson's Field so were totally unaware of the upheaval in the town. To prevent the offenders being charged by the police the ship left at 4am. As punishment the captain would not allow the ship to berth in Townsville but stood off at Palm Island. Because of the 'tow' it took twelve days to reach Sydney. Tony was discharged 25<sup>th</sup> June 1946.

#### Author's Notes:

1. At this time, RM's were allowed to find their own accommodation and pay for their meals with an allowance of 9 shillings per day for this privilege. Tarriff for a 4 berth room at the YMCA was 4 shillings per week. The YMCA building was located on the south west corner of City Road and Sturt Street South Melbourne, quite literally 15 minutes easy walk across Princes Bridge and up Swanston Street to the Melbourne Technical college for daily lectures.

2. All equipment in the Pile light was DC battery operated, hence the need to provide a charger to keep the battery voltage at the correct level.

3. Although this was a short circuit for direct current, at some frequencies the wave length presented a high impedance and radio transmission was satisfactory. But at other frequencies, the impedance was sufficiently low to cause all transmitted output to go straight to earth.

Russell was told that this course was normally 2 years duration.

Accommodation at Lonsdale was at a premium, so those who had homes in Melbourne were encouraged to live at home, for which they were paid 'lodge & comp', a lodging and compensation allowance. As Russell lived with his parents in their Malvern home, he travelled along St Kilda Road by tram each Monday to Friday straight to the RMC for training, fortified by lunch of sandwiches which he bought in town.

Russell's class, RAN24, completed their basic training in November 1943, and this occasion was celebrated with a class dinner at Melbourne's Federal Hotel (Collins Street near Spencer Street), on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November, followed by an evening of entertainment at the 'Tiv', the Tivoli live theatre.

Russell recalls that for most Saturdays of his training period, he and others in his class were required to present themselves at the Lonsdale barracks for about 2 hours of marching, standing to attention and all the other Navy squad drill requirements. Other than this, life revolved around learning about the mysteries of wireless telegraphy transmitters and receivers.

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## Russell Routh

Born 6/3/1921

Russell joined the R.A.N. as an Ordinary Seaman on 3 February 1943. On completion of the mandatory 4 months recruit training at HMAS Cerberus on Western Port Bay, Russell was drafted to HMAS Lonsdale to commence his six months training in wireless theory and practice at the Melbourne Technical College (RMC).



*PO RM Jim Wallace taken in Aden aboard  
HMAS Launceston, 1944*

11/2/44 to 9/3/44, Leading Radio Mechanic  
HMAS Cerberus

10/3/44 to 3/6/44 HMAS Watson as PO RM

10/6/44 to 16/3/45 HMAS Rushcutter and  
Leichhardt Repair workshops with RAN official  
number 26985

17/3/45 to 7/10 46 HMAS Quiberon

8/10/45 to 3/12/46 HMAS Watson

4/12/46 to 18/12/46 HMAS Lonsdale for  
demobilisation

It should be noted that the foregoing information  
was taken directly from my service certificate.

After more than 60 years, it is difficult to  
remember all relevant details precisely, but here  
are a few points which have stuck in my mind.

I don't remember having been taken to sea for  
even a few days during my initial training, a  
fundamental activity which I felt should have  
been basic to all recruit training

Having successfully completed his basic training  
at the RMC, Russell and his class of 23 young  
men were drafted to Sydney for specialised  
technical training at HMAS Watson in radar.  
Accommodation in Sydney was also at a  
premium, so again Russell was on 'lodge and  
comp', this time at the Allied Services Club in  
Macleay Street Potts Point. Following is  
Russell's account of his career in Australia's  
armed services, compiled in January 2005:

I joined the Australian Army on 5/8/41 as Private  
V40768, "I" (Intelligence) Section, 24<sup>th</sup>  
Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, and served in  
that capacity until 2/2/1943. I then transferred to  
the Royal Australian Navy on 3/2/1943 as an  
Ordinary Seaman. Then in date sequence I moved  
as follows:

3/2/43 to 15/6/43 HMAS Cerberus New Entry  
School training with the official number of PM  
5680 R.A.N.R.

16/6/43 to 14/1/44, based at HMAS Lonsdale for  
Radio Training at Melbourne Technical College

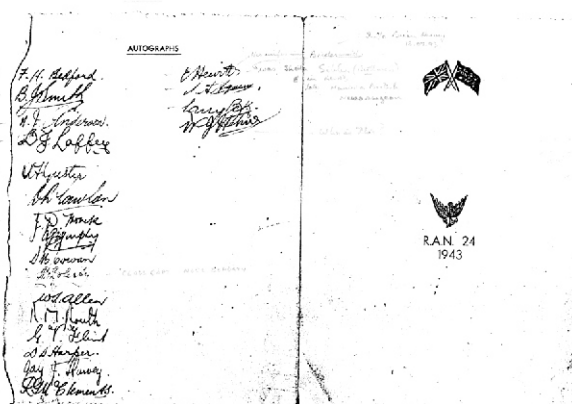
Some of the people I remember are Brian Harvey  
from Adelaide, and Neville Anderson. Others  
were Frank Bedford who became a pharmacist in  
Melbourne, Doug Cowan from WA, Eric Hewitt  
from WA, Don Laffey, Don Lawson who was  
also at Leichhardt and is now deceased, Geoff  
Flint who became a Melbourne dentist and is now  
deceased, Charles Barker who also became a  
Melbourne dentist. A particular friend of mine  
was Bruce Scholes who settled in Benalla, and is  
now deceased. He worked at the Leichhardt  
Repair Centre. During our off duty periods, we  
frequented the Allied Services Club, doing our  
bit to improve relations with members of the  
opposite sex. I also remember particularly  
Neville Rice who was at Leichhardt, and George  
Holland who I think was from 23 Class.

The Radar Mechanic whom I relieved on  
Quiberon was Pat Devery. I took passage on an  
RN destroyer HMS Urchin, from Sydney to the  
Philippines to join Quiberon at Leyte – or it may  
have been Manila.



(Editor's note: All names mentioned by Russell are listed in the Master File)

Quiberon carried only one Radio (ie Radar) Mechanic and that, I think, was the case with all RAN destroyers at the time. This had advantages and disadvantages for me – nobody could tell me what to do, but there was nobody I could turn to for help if I needed it. My experience at Leichhardt was quite invaluable for solving any problems I met on Quiberon's sets. At Leichhardt we dealt with sets which had faults on which Radar Mechanics had not been able to fix at sea. In those days as soon as a Radar manufacturer thought of a new and better idea for a set, it tended to put it into production almost straight away instead of spending the enormous amount of time, effort and energy which would have been spent in peace time to get any bugs out of it first. Thus in spite of any amount of routine maintenance being carried out aboard ships, the development of faults was common. Also in those days, you had to usually detect a faulty individual part and replace it, rather than having a whole new circuit to put in its place.



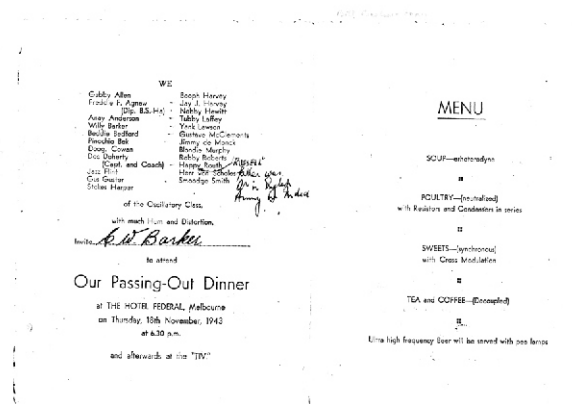
Quiberon's operational service during the period I was on her, was largely with the British Pacific Fleet in the areas around the Sakishimas and Ryukyus (near Okinawa). These places had airfields used by the Kamikazi bombers whose main aim was to get the flight decks of our (aircraft) carriers ablaze so that our aircraft which were trying to intercept them and bomb their airfields could not land on their flight decks. Thus when that happened, the pilots had to ditch and destroyers like Quiberon picked them up.

We were also involved in protecting the fleet from Jap submarines and any surface craft all the

time. This was particularly importantly the case in early August 1945 (when) we were with several British and American Battleships and cruisers which bombarded the Japanese coast just south of Tokyo to cut a railway and destroy an industrial complex.

After the war finished we were in such things as being one of the first Allied ships up the Yangtse-Kiang for several days picking up emaciated Australian and other POWs from Keeling, a port in North Formosa (Taiwan), ferrying a Company of Dutch Ambonese mercenaries from Macassar to Polopo (both in the Celebes now Sulawesi) to put down – temporarily – an Indonesian uprising. Some of us were rather unhappy about doing this as we had previously been at Polopo for several days when it was in Indonesian hands and had made friends there among them.

After a while, Quiberon came back to Australia, and was then off to Japan for several months as part of the Occupation Forces.



In the process of compiling this Cameo, I was asked to include some personal anecdotes. So here goes

1. At FND New Entry School one day, the CPO taking us said "Who would like to ride a motor bike?" Nearly everyone put up their hands. He said, "All right, you'll do", pointing to one of us, "I want you to go on a short errand to about a mile outside the Depot and deliver this parcel. The bike is just out there behind the shed". The rating came back quickly. "There is no motor bike out

there Chief, only a push bike". "That's right, you're the motor. Off you go".

2. During Smoko one day, another CPO said, "Now we are all off duty at the moment and on Smoko – everyone clear about that?" "Yes Chief". "Hands up those who would like to be alive at the end of the war". Everyone put their hands up. "All right, well I'll tell you what to do. Do what you are told, go where you are pushed, and NEVER volunteer for a thing. Above all, never volunteer for a boarding party".

3. At the end of our time at the New Entry School at FND, the officer taking the parade said fall out all those ratings with a pass in Leaving Certificate Physics." A tiny band of us fell out and we were soon spoken to by another officer. "We urgently need more Radio and Radar Mechanics in the Navy. Your educational background will enable you to complete a course of training for this more easily and quickly than other people. As you know, in the Navy we believe in the volunteer system, so I'm going to regard each of you as a volunteer to take this course!" We were then taken to see another officer – I think an Education Officer – who allowed any rating who objected strongly and pushed hard to be excused from taking the course. But it was touch and go. It just so happened that it suited me to take the course as I felt I had always been rather impractical and poor with my hands, and this would be good for me.

4. In Shanghai there were a lot of White Russians, and there was the International Settlement and the French Concession. It seemed that the Japanese had interned or otherwise disposed of most of the white males but had left the white women. We were white and we were male, so some of these white women were rather pleased to see us.

5. We were at Macassar tied up alongside the wharf from just before to just after Christmas 1945. On Christmas Day, some of the crew got VERY drunk whilst on shore leave on local "wood alcohol", jungle juice or whatever, and came back on board and threw a lot of equipment in the galley over the side of the ship into the sea.

The next day, Boxing Day, the First Lieutenant – quite a good bloke by the name of (name withheld)

called a parade of the entire ship's company at which he arraigned the culprits in a rather and formal legalistic manner, rather like this (as best my memory serves from almost 60 years)

The atmosphere was serious, solemn, tense, electric: "Able Seaman 'Smith' & 'Jones' you are charged that on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December 1945 you did cause to be deposited over the side of His Majesty's Ship Quiberon, galley property to wit one bain marie for the use of cooks in the said galley"

"Able Seaman 'Brown', you are charged that you caused to be deposited over the side of the said ship sundry saucepans to wit four large, seven small, cooks for the use of".

"Leading Cook 'Black', your offence is that you caused to be deposited over the side of His Majesty's Ship Quiberon on the aforesaid day a number of frying pans, to wit four porcelain, three aluminium, to wit one large, two small".

And so it went on. After another one or two 'to wits' someone towards the back called out 'To whoo'. The ship's company couldn't contain itself, the atmosphere was broken and most people tittered if not laughed. The First Lieutenant, to his credit, pulled his face straight to prevent himself smiling, and carried straight through the charges. He did not say "Fall out that rating", nor did he seek out the person afterwards. I guess we all knew that owls were supposed to say 'To wit to whoo' but what made the comment particularly relevant was, I think, that it just so happened that many of us had studied Shakespeare's "Loves Labour Lost" at school and knew the lines in it "To wit to whoo, a merry note while greasy Joan doth keel the pot". So fitting for something about a galley.

6. Whilst in Japan in 1946 we spent four days at Toba, a little pearling village across the peninsula from Osaka. A young Japanese man walked up to me and said "You teach me English, I teach you pearls". "OK" I said. The next four days were useful for both of us. It enabled me to buy a good choice of pearls to give to friends and relations

7. In Tokyo I bought a lot of mink skins for cash and barter. (When the ship returned to Australia before going to Japan I bought a lot of cigarettes,

soap and clothing etc to sell for cash or barter in Japan). I took these to the Customs House in Circular Quay, paid the duty, got a Customs Clearance Certificate and, armed with this, sold the skins to Mr Biber of Biber Furs at a good profit.

Russell was drafted to HMAS Watson, then HMAS Lonsdale and demobilised on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1946 in Melbourne, the city of his enlistment.

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## **Norman Leslie Saunders**

### **A Brief Resume of the Working Life in Both The Civil and Naval Spheres**

Born: Kalgoorlie - Western Australia Date of Birth : 22/01/1920

1.0 After completing schooling at Eastern Goldfields High School I commenced a five year indenture in Electrical Fitting with the Boulder Perseverance Goldmining Company at Fimiston Western Australia

During the course of my indenture the Second World War was declared. I could not enlist in the Navy as I wished to because of my being an apprentice.

2.0 At the completion of my indenture in early 1942 I once again applied to join the Navy. For some abstract reason which eludes me to this day, I could not be accepted as an Electrical Artisan with the rank of Petty Officer but had to accept the classification of "Wireman". My official number was 26085

3.0 On 25/08/42 arrived at HMAS Cerberus to commence duties as dictated.

4.0 On 23/10/42 drafted to HMAS Lonsdale to commence training as a Wireless Mechanic - This followed my application to be trained in R.D.F. Later to be renamed "Radar"

5.0 Completed training on 23/02/43 and drafted back to HMAS Cerberus for training on Naval

Equipment, and from there to Naval Transmitting Station at Canberra

6.0 On 03/07/43 drafted to HMAS Rushcutter to commence training at RAN Stn. 184 - South Head - Sydney as a Radar Mechanic.

7.0 Completed training at 184 after which I was appointed a Lecturer in Radar at 184.

8.0 On 28/11/43 was drafted to HMAS Leeuwin (Station 276) a training, operational and fitting out base. During the period at this base I was appointed Act Petty Officer and later to the substantive rank.

9.0 Demobilised from the Navy at the end of World War II and on the First March 1946.

10.0 At the start of the academic year 1947 I commenced as a rehabilitation student my studies for the Associateship in Engineering at the Western School of Mines in Kalgoorlie. I completed this qualification in 1951.

11.0 At the end of 1951 I joined the Mechanical and Plant Engineers Branch of the Public Works Dept. Perth as a base grade Electrical Engineer.

12.0 In 1961 the Public Works Dept decided to create new Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Branches attached to the rapidly expanding Architectural Division of the Dept. I was appointed to establish the new Electrical Engineering Branch and having established it, to manage it. This I did as Chief Electrical Engineer until my retirement. A large number of major projects were designed and the construction supervised/managed during this period. The largest being the Queen Elizabeth II medical centre at Hollywood an inner metropolitan suburb.

13.00 In October 1980 I was elected a "Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia."

14.00 In the year 2002 I was awarded the Centenary Medal by the Commonwealth of Australia to mark the 100 years of Federation of Australia. The award was in recognition of my services to certain aspects of the Electrical Industry.

15.00 After retirement from the Public Works Dept. I was invited by a Firm of Consulting Engineers in West Perth to join the firm as a Consultant on a part time basis. This I did and stayed with this firm for approximately 14 years.

And so ends a rewarding and very satisfying working life

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## Clyde Scaife

### Reflections of a "H.O." Radar Mechanic

Working as a laboratory assistant at the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute, I saw the newly built Royal Melbourne Hospital given over to the U.S. Army in early 1942, and rapidly filled with casualties from Guadalcanal and New Guinea.



*L to R: LRMs Sam Dawson, Jack Mills, Tom Pearson, Clyde Scaife. Photo taken in Railway Square, Sydney ca 1943*

When I turned 18, in January 1943, the Navy was advertising for laboratory assistants, so I joined up as a Sick Bay Tiffy, only to find that the training offered was boring repetition of the sick berth manual, and laboratory work was non-existent.

Fortunately I spotted a notice calling for those with leaving physics to apply for training as a Radio Mechanic, applied, and was accepted,

joining class R.A.N, 19 at the Melbourne Technical College, now the RMIT University.

We were on strength at HMAS Lonsdale, the Port Melbourne shore base, but locals were allowed to live out, going ashore at 10 p.m. after supervised study.

The six-month course in radio was given by a civilian instructor, Mr. Asbornsen, (nick named "Aspro" ) in Campbell's Building in Victoria Street

Herewith a photo of RAN class 19, with "Aspro," published in the Melbourne Age about 13<sup>th</sup> July 1943.

Completing the radio course, we were promoted to Radio Mechanic IV, acting Leading R.M.

Those selected for Radar were transferred from the RANR to the RAN on a short term of two years or the duration, hence "Hostilities Only or H.O."

To mark our permanent Navy status we were issued with a new service number, a two inch cube of yellow soap, a pair of leather slippers, and a "housewife" sewing kit, which I still have, although it is a bit moth eaten.

We were transferred to the Sydney shore station, HMAS Rushcutter, for Radar training at Watson's Bay, South Head. (HMAS Watson did not then exist.) Completing Radar training, I was confirmed as LRM, issued with a wooden toolbox and tools, which I still retain.

I was then drafted to HMAS Penguin, to stand by June, completing her fitting out at Poole & Steele's yard in Balmain the third man to join her, after the Chief Stoker and the Chief ERA.

Why the Radar Mechanic was sent so early is a bit of a mystery, but I had a good chance to get a few tiddy jobs done, and made the battery locker in the Port waist comfortable as my private space. This space began as a broom and cleaning locker before Radar was fitted

We had two sets, the A286Q air warning set with the bedstead array aerial at the head of the



foremast, and the A272, aerial in the “dustbin” above the signal projector on top of the bridge.

explain why radar had not reported the great Sunderland flying boat in clear view I was able to show that it had been reported half an hour earlier, with the operator told to “disregard.”



*RAN 19 Class Melbourne Technical College - Under Instruction. Part class only, published in the Melbourne "Age" July 1943. L to R: Clyde Scaife, Roy King, Instructor R (Aspro) Asbornson, Alex Richardson, Donald (Blue) Simons, Instructor name unknown, Tom Rees, Jack Mills, Sam Dawson, Mansfield (Jim) Laws, Alexander (Dave) Shorland.*

Both sets were in what was originally the captain's bathroom, starboard side aft in the bridge structure, with the 272 transmitter under the ladder leading up to the bridge.

Each had a simple type A display on a five inch CRT. No PPI.

The museum ship HMAS Castlemaine has good presentation of slightly more advanced equipment, but placed facing the door, instead of aft.

When Junee commissioned and we sailed north, I quickly learnt that the officers knew little of Radar, hence were disinclined to trust it

I also learnt the value of the written operator's log book, so that, when called to the bridge to

If the Officer or the Watch could not see anything where the echo was reported it was deemed not to exist.

.The Captain only trusted us after radar was able to show him a safe way out of a deserted, unlit, bay west of Darwin on a pitch-black night

Jap aircraft had become quite rare over Darwin in 1944, and the Spitfire pilots a trifle bored, however the 286 aerial required servicing, with the mechanic sitting on the top of the foremast, highly visible to bored pilots.

One would hear the growing roar of a Merlin engine, look around to see a Spitfire hurtling inbound at 400 knots, and cling to the aerial for dear life as it flashed past, so close the slip stream shook the mast, and the mug mechanic sitting on it.

Years later I learned from a fellow medical student that he had been one of those bored pilots buzzing sailors sitting on masts in Darwin harbour.

“You would lose sight of them about 400 yards out, count three and then pull back on the stick.”

By the next year, reliance on Radar had developed, demonstrated when HMAS Manoora almost ran us down north of New Guinea, our 272 having drifted out of tune.

Nobody on the bridge saw a thing until the challenge was blinked out of the blackness of night.

Radar's greatest glory on Junee occurred when we were escorting a floating dock, YFD2 1, under tow by U. S. tug “Point Loma” from Hollandia, north towards the Philippines.

In the dead of night, with the tow making 5 knots, and Junee circling around, our 272 reported an echo on the far side of the dock.

Action stations, full ahead, we charged round to the echo position. Nothing, no sighting, no Asdic echo, chaos, confusion, mild concern.

All round sweep on short-range scale, and there was the echo, again on the far side of the dock. We raced around like the blue tailed fly, and again nothing, only to have the echo again reappear on the far side of the dock. Finally, after we had lit up the world with star shell, the penny dropped.

We were getting a double bounce echo, the beam travelling from Junee to dock, to Junee with enough energy bouncing back from Junee to dock and back again for a second journey, giving a second, tiny, echo at double the range.

The captain took some convincing to prove this, by taking the ship slowly towards and then away from the dock, demonstrating that the second echo range was always double the range of the dock.

This was a ghost echo with a rare but logical explanation, but the radar boys on Junee had humble pie for supper for many a day.

One other little snippet may be of interest to surviving HO RM's

How did it come about that PO RMs were messed with the, seaman PO's rather than with the ERAs ?

Well, on HMAS Junee we had a PO Mechanician, a permanent Navy chap who had entered as a stoker, and worked his way up to be a trade qualified fitter, and rightly proud of his trade status, messed with the ERAs, as was this upstart young pup of a Radar Mechanic, who was not really a trade qualified artisan.

This guy complained to the Captain, and then to NOIC Darwin, from which it went on up through channels to Navy Office in Melbourne, where a decision was made and promulgated as a policy, that henceforth Radar Mechanics were to mess with the seamen PO's.

Much ado about trade status.



Melbourne Technical College 4 RAN Class 1942. Taken on the roof of the Radio School. Back L to R: Bob Beveridge, Bill Holder, Jack Cations. Front L to R: Col Haydon, Bill Lyon, Roy (Lofty) Travers

## James Ernest Henry West

PO R/Mech 26461 D.O.B.1917

1941

Aug. Put my name down at RAN, Forrest Place, Perth. I was a teacher at a

	remote country school. One train per week		Mr Gloury insisted on 90% as RAN pass. RAAF 50% will do.
Dec.	School closed. Transferred to Boulder (daily train RAN insisted). However I was 'sworn in' Ordinary Seaman	<b>1943</b> Mar 1.	To FND Signal School to see RAN Wireless equipment under CPO Tel Snow Harper, but mainly I think.:
<b>1942</b>			
Feb 20.	Report Cliff Street Fremantle for medical.		1. To change from round to square rig (We were given an allowance to go to tailors in Melbourne)
Mar 13	Forrest Place for F.N.D. There were 19 of us		2. To change from RANR F4105 to RAN 26461. Now Acting Leading Wireless Mechanic.
Mar 19	Arrived F.N.D. Block D. Class 51	April 16.	To HMAS "Rushcutter" to attend establishment at South Head (No Watson yet). We lived out (I was in Double Bay). A286P operating in asbestos hut. (Lt Cdr Strange, Lt Hughson, "Froggy" Pieremont, L/Tel Hayes, CPO Dalgliesh). Apparently also told about 271 & 285
July	Completed training as Ordinary Seaman  1. Schoolies came looking round for people interested in radio. 6 months course. No Takers!! Most of our 19 had degrees or Leaving Certificates  2. Then John Gloury came around wanting people with proven ability to study. Use your ability to serve your country. Pennington, Johnson and West volunteered.	Nov 11	To HMAS Kuttatul, Port Radar Office. PRO (Lt Phil Norman, Eng Lt Alan Whitfield, PO Gilbert Trentsky, L/RM Frank Bate and John Fisher. Garden Island still an island. Corvettes being built at Morts Dock and Cockatoo Island by Poole & Steele. We finished the radar. Also work on Dutch "van Tromp", "Arunta", "Gascoyne", "Shropshire", French "Le Triomphant". Many Corvettes.
July 23.	Arrived HMAS Lonsdale for course at Melbourne Tech. RMIT. Tech 9 – 5, Phys Ed and meal then 7 – 9 Prep.  Mr Gloury (Headmaster Lieutenant) wonderful also.  Comm. Schoolmaster Matthews. Even the Phys Ed instructor was nice!!  Course seemed to start at Junior Physics level and I think we eventually built a superhet receiver.  Classes were about 30-40 comprising 7-8 RAN, 30 or so RAAF.		First job on arrival "Clean the aerials of HMAS Kanimbla" – a very scary climb up the stick and the aerials were quite clean. Was I a victim of a 'new boy' joke? I never found out. Boss Phil Norman advised us to get to sea or we would receive no benefits after the war.
		<b>1944</b>	



Apr 6.	To HMAS Lonsdale for overseas pool. Now on records "Bathurst pool"	English Wren LRMs. Lt Cdr Gordon Power, POs Porter, Mitchell, Phipps, Max Arnold, West.
Apr 13.	About 3 weeks waiting for party of R/Mechs. Used to go to pictures 3 times a day, We had to be on call 24 hours. LRMs Treager, Chapman, Wise, Steel, Soar, West etc (9 I think)	<b>1946</b> Jan 29. To Leeuwin for leave and discharge Feb 19. Demobilised.
May 2.	Embarked TSS "Nellore" for passage to Colombo depot ship HMS Lanka	
May 28.	Arrived Colombo. To dockside camp.	
June 5.	To HMAS Gawler. Messed with PO Stokers, all permanent Navy. Wonderful fellows, friends for life. R286P. Oil tanker convoys from Persian Gulf to Aden.	
Aug 15.	Refit and scrape in Colombo. Got new E291 & E242. Beauty. Stokers had inclinometer in boiler room. They swore the new dome made the ship roll more. "Bloody radar" when cups etc fell out of racks.	
Oct 4.	Escorted ship load of pilgrims, lights ablaze, to Mecca. Then based at Aden	
Nov 13.	Aden to Bombay. Thence to minesweeping Palk Strait.	
Dec 25.	Christmas Day in dock in Colombo. Back to Bay of Bengal	
<b>1945</b>		
Jan 26.	Huge convoy of workshop ships, 10 corvettes, a cruiser for Fremantle.	
Feb 10.	Arrive Fremantle. HMAS Leeuwin leave.	
Mar 14.	HMAS Rushcutter for Leichhardt workshops. Supervised 140 English LRMs. After 6 months replaced by	

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### Gregory Allan Woodward

The following has been compiled by the editor, then amended by Greg

Greg volunteered 28 July 1942, and was mobilised into the RANR on 9 September 1942 with official number PM4845. Following basic fitness and induction training as an Ordinary Seaman, Greg was transferred to HMAS Lonsdale for training as a Radio Mechanic. A Melbourne Technical College certificate shows attendance from November 1942 to May 1943 in the Special Full Day Defence Training Course for R.A.N. Radio Mechanics. Following completion of a further month of training at RAN Signal School at FND, on Naval W/T equipment, Greg was transferred to the R.A.N. on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1943 as Radio Mechanic, and advanced to Leading Radio Mechanic the next day, 18 July 1943. Greg was then posted to HMAS Watson in Sydney for specialised Radar training at Watson. Greg recalls that although they were trained as Radar Mechanics, the use of the word Radar was absolutely forbidden, so overtly they were Radio Mechanics. Accommodation in Naval establishments was at a premium, so Greg and 3 of his classmates, Perc Watkins Don Fraser and Phil Gerrans, stayed for some nights at the Allied Services Club Potts Point, until they found and shared a large room at a boarding house at Bondi.

Following attendance at the Radar School HMAS Watson, 21 June 1943 to 11 November 1943, Greg was posted to HMAS Arunta. To get to Arunta was not at all straightforward. From Sydney Greg went by troop train to Brisbane, then troop train to Cairns, then back to



Townsville by troop train, then to Milne Bay by HMV Duntroon. In Arunta, he took part in the bombardment of Arawe, and the Allied landings at Cape Gloucester & Saidor PNG. Arunta then returned to Sydney for a refit.

On 22 April 1944, Greg was posted to HMAS Norman. From then until 6 October 1944, Norman did convoy duties in the Indian Ocean, visiting Trincomalee, Colombo, Aden, Bombay, Adu Atol (Maldiv Islands) and the Seychelles Islands. Greg was promoted to Petty Officer Radio Mechanic on 18 June 1944, while serving in Norman.

Shortly after leaving Norman, Greg found himself in the Corvette HMAS Burnie on 16<sup>th</sup> October, which became his home for the next 17 months until 20 March 1946.

Burnie's duties were convoy escort and minesweeping, initially in the Indian Ocean, and subsequently with the British Pacific Fleet (BPF). Ships of the Australian 21<sup>st</sup> Minesweeping Flotilla were engaged in convoy duties close to Japan at the time of the surrender. Burnie escorted supply ships back to Leyte in the Philippines, then proceeded back to Hong Kong. The Flotilla cleared Hong Kong, Amoy and Swatow of mines before proceeding back to Australia in December 1945.

While in Burnie, the ship received a cypher machine, sometimes called "Type X". A quote from Greg's memoirs reads as follows:

"From memory, the machine was located in the chart room. Our Leading Signalman and his team operated the machine, but yours truly, PORM Woodward, was made responsible for its maintenance, and testing its performance.

We knew it as the C.C.M. (Confidential Cypher Machine) and I believe its purpose was for communications within and between ships of the BPF and the American fleet, with whom we operated from time to time.

I think our CCM would have had about a dozen wheels and it necessitated me learning to do one or two finger typing. The means of testing was to set up a code of letters in a line across the wheels,

then type in the magical formula or message 'Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party. The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog'

The paper ribbon which came out in a perforated cypher form was then fed back into the machine after the wheels (letter code line) were re-set; and if the message came out faithfully as originally coded, then the machine was operating correctly."

From Burnie in March 1946 till his demob on 2 September 1946, Greg was stationed at HMAS Watson.

NOTE: In the master list, one of Greg's ships is shown as Bathurst. Greg makes the following comments:

"My RAN Service Records show Bathurst Pool 7/10/44 – 15/10/44, the time between leaving Norman in Trincomalee and joining Burnie in Colombo. In this period I was at an RN establishment in Colombo – Chatham Barracks or Depot, and shared a hut with two seasoned RN PO Seamen, also enjoying, for the first time, a tot of rum with midday meals. I think Bathurst Pool means I was awaiting posting to an RAN "Bathurst" class corvette which turned out to be Burnie.

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## Anon

This is a true story, except the name of the HO RM and his location have been changed to prevent him from being caught, and made to walk the plank. Let's call him Fred, and say he was stationed at the fictitious location of Big Bay.

Big Bay was a large forward base with perhaps 7,000 troops, many being US Marines and most in transit for front line duties. Fred was the base radio maintenance man. His workshop was a converted warehouse, the walls and roof of which were double layers of corrugated iron, with coconut fibre between to provide some measure of heat insulation.

Fred's billet was a mile or so distant and was part of the Australian contingent living and administrative quarters. Daily Fred would walk along the track from his billet to his workshop, periodically doing little forays into the jungle off the main track whenever he saw a fresh track had been made. One one occasion he came upon a cache of ammunition – thousands of rounds – and wisely left these be. A day or so later all had disappeared. Fred was glad this hazard had been removed from his domain.

On another occasion, following a fresh track, Fred discovered a timber case bearing the names Gilbeys, and Australia. This didn't mean anything to Fred, but he was intrigued to know what was in the box from Australia. Upon prising the box open, Fred discovered it was packed full of bottles of Gilbeys Gin and a brand of whiskey. On searching a bit further, Fred found three more boxes.

Now this was almost Aladdin's cave. So Fred hot footed it back to his billet to give the exciting news to his messmates, and to invite their participation in a rescue operation. None wanted anything to do with the matter, fearing unspeakable retribution if they were caught doing the honorable thing of preserving the misplaced assets while searching for the rightful owner. So Fred took charge of matters. He borrowed a Jeep, collected the four cases, transported the lot to his spacious workshop and here, restowed the 4 dozen bottles into a large upturned container.

Within 24 hours two significant events occurred. One was that the micreant who had been transporting the grog from the wharf to the RAN HQ Wardroom and who had unlawfully hidden it, returned to the scene of his crime, only to discover, as did Mother Hubbard, that the cupboard was bare. This person, who was well known as an alcoholic, immediately threw such a horrific tantrum, that he had to be physically restrained in a steel cage. His condition deteriorated to the point where he was shipped back to Australia for specialised medical attention. At this point, Fred was the only living soul in Big Bay who knew the location of the missing Wardroom grog.

The other event was that the Wardroom recognised that a major theft had been perpetrated, and instituted searches. Fred's workshop was one location which was examined in some detail. And here is an interesting aside. Because Fred had unwittingly hidden the grog in an obvious place, there on the floor inside the upturned large container for all to see, the container was ignored by the searchers who focussed their attention on hidden nooks and crannies.

Feeling some measure of guilt, Fred decided to dispose of the 48 bottles of spirits. He figured that he couldn't return the bottles to the Wardroom. Because of the considerable elapsed time since the theft had occurred (some days) Fred feared he might be accused of illegally acquiring the grog in the first instance. Besides which, who would believe he simply found it in the jungle. So, in a spirit of international co-operation, Fred offered a bottle to a US Marine who paid Fred \$US 3-00. In the year 2005, the equivalent would probably be of the order of \$AUS 50-00. The law of supply and demand being what it is, within a very short space of time, Fred had graciously parted with all 48 bottles to deserving cases.

Author's note. I am under a genuine threat of severe admonition if I give even a hint as to the real identity of Fred, so on this matter, no correspondence will be entered into.

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## Chapter 2 - The Richardson Papers

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the Cameos in Chapter 1.

The background is that in 1996, prior to the thought of creating this history, John Saywell asked Alex Richardson to put together stories of HO RMs from the Melbourne Technical College classes 19, 20 and 21. Alex made contact with 6 of these, and persuaded each to write a “concise CV” to include prior RAN experiences, RAN service, post war happenings and appropriate anecdotes.

Having received these 6 CVs, and including his own, Alex then created a summary which he titled “A Resume of Eight (HO) Ratings)”. The following pages in this chapter contain verbatim copies of this resume, together with each of the 7 CVs. The author is assuming that the missing 8<sup>th</sup> CV is that of Robin Lambert (Bob) Steele, whose name appears on Alex’s correspondence list, but for whom there is no CV, Bob having died prior to Alex attempting to make contact.

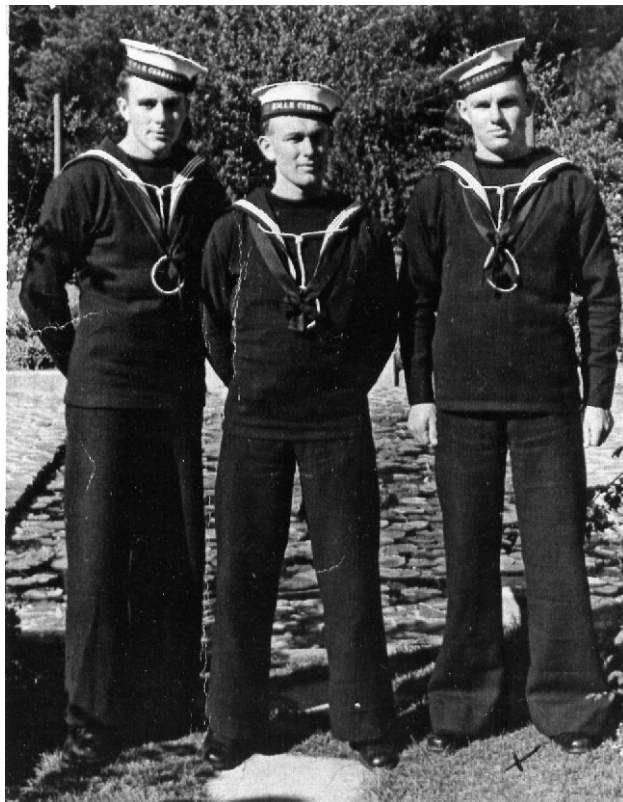
Other than minor editing here and there correcting some spelling, the texts remain unaltered for the reason, as explained in the previous chapter on Cameos, that it is most important that the style of the writer, hence his personality, comes through as strongly as his messages in the text.

In addition to these CVs, Alex recorded the following comments:

Sketchy knowledge of others in original Feb course. Ken Hayes became ill and rejoined the R/M course several months later. He became a noted stud breeder in Leongatha, Vic. and radio consultant in agricultural matters to get an AO last year.

Tom Pearson became PMG Engineer coming to Rabaul in 1953 then later in Port Moresby – then reported to be in Malaysia – no more contact. No knowledge of Phil Silberberg, Harry Teague, Ken (KH) Wilson, Jim Laws, Ivan Rosenove or “Tassie” Vincent.

Clyde Scaife joined our class as an SBA and has been reported to be a doctor for some years in Western Victoria. “Blue” Simons was a Warrant Officer Radar at Watson in 1947, but no more record of him.



*Future Radio Mechanics, all from Western Australia at FND 1942. L to R: Harry Lance (Bill) Pennington, William (Bill) Johnson, Wakter Roy (Roy) Ellis*

### A RESUME OF EIGHT (H. O.) RATINGS.

Wartime recruiting to the R.A.N. encompassed a great variation in past experiences of the would be sailors. One group for example, contained one or more Athletes, Bookworms, Chemist, Dentists, Engineers, Forester, Geologist, and High School student. At the start of 1943, openings occurred for budding officers and radio mechanics, provided their background contained a minimum pass in Leaving Physics. Applicants included Technical students, Army Telegraphy, P.M.G, and University graduates with experience in Engineering be it Electrical, Civil, or Aircraft, Chemistry, or Agriculture. Our group

involved personnel from Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and various rural areas. In 1943 some of these “applicants/volunteers/appointee /draftees” were offered Officer Training Courses, but were not interested in becoming “90 day wonders”, possibly going to sea on such craft as P.T.Boats or the like where the only barrier from the sea and you and high octane was reinforced plywood.

We gathered in February 1943 in FND, HMAS Cerberus, having all necessary injections, tests, and the usual indignities, were transferred bag and hammock to various quarters in Melbourne for the Wireless course at Melbourne Technical College.

Those cold concrete floors kept us awake for the 41/2 months of basic wireless training by “Aspro”. Further courses included Morse Code, R.A.N Wireless sets, army and airforce modified sets, etc, etc., leading to several weeks of Special Oscillators. Those chosen for this latter course were drafted to H.M.A.S. Rushcutter, but actually to the South Head Training Establishment, isolated by the Army barracks on the the area that overlooked Sydney Harbour from Watson’s Bay to the west and the sea over The Gap to the east. For this draft we became R.A.N. (H.O.) ratings with permanent Navy numbering signing some secrecy code, which I doubt if many read. Some of the group, after only a few months in the navy became acting Leading hands with no service stripes, A/LRM(W). This led to a few more months of special oscillators, special aerials, oscilloscopes, magnetrons, klystrons, wave guides, and other equipment barely understood. Some aerials were tiny knobs in the centre of a reflector, all enclosed in a plywood covered drum, others in the open air on top of the mainmast and resembling a bedstead, or four metal rods on the end of a bracket protruding from just below the crow’snest.

On completion of the various courses the new sailors were drafted to corvettes, frigates, destroyers, shore-based Radar and Radio workshops in Sydney, Canberra, Milne Bay,

Madang. The navy career of our stalwarts covered further time in minesweeping, escort duties, and shore based duties utilising their seagoing experiences. Those drafted to corvettes found themselves alone with the care of new radar sets that were different from those trained upon at Watsons Bay. Imagine being greeted under those circumstances by your Ship’s Radar Officer with “You are the only intelligentsia for this equipment and my job is to keep the books such as they are, in safekeeping when you do not need them”. This from the navigator of the ship just before going to Sea.

Personnel drafted to cruisers encountered radar sets never before heard of had at least experienced mechanics in the English and American equipment. Compare the A 286 modified from R.A. F. sets with the E.285 whose transmitter was several times larger than all a corvette’s equipment.

Go to sea for the first time in a corvette with six equally inexperienced operators, several of whom were usually seasick during their watch in a six foot by six foot cabin that is enclosed to avoid light coming during the day or going out during the dark hours. Three months of this ensuring the equipment was operating constantly with an average three to four hours of sleep per day was a real sink or swim experience. Some incidents not wanting repetition involved work on the mast. Who wants to be pushed off the ladder by a moving bedstead array being operated by your offsider from inside the cabin forcing you to hang by your hands on that aerial whilst deciding which way to bring you back to the mast. Try fixing the outer ABK counterpoise rod during a storm. Most of the time a fall would be into an angry sea. Try looking for a small craft on a moonless night off Japanese held coast picking up a group of commandos whose portable recognition equipment has been lost when they had been on the run for three weeks. Postwar saw some of the group qualifying further in Electrical Engineering in Melbourne or Sydney, others doing Accountancy in both these cities, gaining experience on pastoral leases in N.S.W., working with a Stock and Station



agency, Oil companies gaining experience on pastoral leases in NSW, working with a Stock & Station agency, oil companies, and in forest management

By 1956 the group's activities spanned time in NW of N.S.W., business management in Sydney, Adelaide, and London, on H.M.A.S. Vovager, as accountant for a timber milling company with the Commonwealth Auditor General's Department in Rabaul. T.P.N.G., and biochemical work in Sydney and Adelaide.

By 1966 we were the manager of a Merino stud, a Director of Ferris car radios, R.A.N. Commander in Canberra, Audit Inspector in Canberra, engineers in Sydney and N.S.W. towns, Oil company technical and sales officer in Sydney, and forest management and research in Queensland

During the next 20 years, some expanded their businesses, became Secretary "watchdog" in big business groups, Assistant Auditor General, R.A.N. Commodore, some travelled on business and/or pleasure to London, Bahrain, New York and many places in the world and Australia. One became a member of the award I.S.O.

Then in 1996 the group of eight enjoyed a reunion in Canberra after 53 years. It was as if we had only seen one another a week or a month ago. Most of us were lucky to have our wives still with us and they enjoyed the festivities with us. The only impediments to the constant reminiscing with renewed company were related to age; we needed our beauty sleep, all are over three score and ten, all needed a rest after several days activities and home and family commitments called.

Thanks to the organisers is the least we can say. WE HAD A BALL.

•

**Tom Chapman**

On leaving school in 1942 I joined the Navy as Ordinary Seaman S7797. My NSW Leaving Certificate secured a place in class 20 of the then Melbourne Technical College and later H.M.A.S. Watson. After qualifying as Leading Radio Mechanic (W) 26739, I was sent to H.M.A.S. Lonsdale and joined "Bathurst Pool" for passage in S.S. NELLORE to join the destroyer "NAPIER". I stayed with NAPIER until 24th October 1945 when the N class destroyers were transferred to the Royal Navy and her crew went to QUALITY. Next move was to H.M.A.S. Watson before joining ECUCHA, one of the ships making up the 20th Mine sweeping flotilla working off north Queensland coast. I left ECUCHA in April 1947 and was finally demobilised next month.

After leaving the navy I headed for a job on a sheep and cattle property in north western New South Wales. My knowledge of the pastoral industry was minimal and I had to learn a host of rural facts as well as to understand the habits of station people. Years passed and I became manager of a Merino Sheep Stud in Western New South Wales. Dorothy and I were married in 1953 and lived on the station which was then in a quite isolated area. Our two sons had their early schooling lessons from their mother (with correspondence) before going to Sydney for secondary then tertiary education – wisely they opted for careers in the world of commerce and business. Advancing years caused a move to the Sunshine Coast where Dorothy and I set up house after selling our pastoral land.

The Radio Mechanics Association sparked an interest in life during the 1940s and resulted in the renewal of friendships formed during these years. Looking back on "the good old days" I feel that the H.O Radio Mechanics did very well, considering the basic training they received and the sometimes unreliable behaviour of their electronic equipment.

As the fighting against the Japanese was drawing to a close, NAPIER was part of the screen for H.M.S. INDEFATIGABLE in the northwest Pacific. Her last strike against the Japanese homeland was launched 15th August 1945, and the war was declared over later that day. To celebrate the occasion, one representative from

each mess made up a party for drinks in the Wardroom – an unheard of event. We had barely gathered when the alarm bells sounded – a short long short long - —, - —, - —, - — for air alert. It would have been a desperate drinker who stayed to down his beer and all hands raced for their stations as the sound of firing could be heard. All clear came quite soon, the intruder having fallen victim of the carrier's fighters. Later radar contacts indicated other bandits but these came to nothing. Our drinks also came to nothing – a rumour had it that the Wardroom staff took advantage of the confusion and ensured no alcohol was wasted. No second invitation for drinks down aft was issued. The idea was a good one but the result could be classed as the last laugh for the Japanese.

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## George M Holland

### EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

#### PRE NAVY.

Leaving Certificate Newington College Stanmore NSW 1939. Cadet Engineer Cockatoo Docks & Engineering Co

Eng Diploma Student Sydney Technical College Seconded to National Oil Pty Ltd. Commonwealth Aircraft Corp. Eng. Trainee.

#### ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

S 7806. Ordinary Seaman. 26882 Radio Mechanic. Port Radar Garden Island Sydney HMAS Hawkesbury.

#### POST NAVY

Returned to El. Eng. and Industrial Mgt. studies Sydney Tech. Graduated 1950

TS Skillman & Co Pty Ltd Sydney. (Production Supervisor) Seconded to TS Skillman & Co London. (General Manager) (Skillmans developed and manufactured multi channel telephone systems for telephone authorities in Australia and overseas).

From 1954 to 1959, I held various positions in management of Electrical and Mechanical manufacturing businesses. Studied Marketing and Commerce at Sydney Tech.

In 1959 I joined Ferris Industries Ltd as Director and remained in charge of Development and Manufacture until 1968 when the changes to tariff laws began the rapid destruction of the Entertainment Electronics Industry. Ferris were best known for car radio and Television set manufacture. Having severed ties with the dying electronics industry in 1968 I joined the Board of Newmetal Mines Ltd, and with my brother in law David Thomson set up the diamond drilling business Holland & Thomson Pty Ltd.

I picked up studying geology from Leaving Certificate 1939 level and studied Fluid Power at the Sydney Tech, I also studied drilling technology.

Newmetal Mines Ltd diversified beyond exploration and mining and invested in several fields including Merchant Banking, Iron and steel forging, liquor wholesaling and retailing, abattoirs and meat sales and real estate development. I remained as Chairman of the group until the company was taken over in 1987.

Meanwhile I remained MD of Holland & Thomson Pty Ltd until about the same time when I handed over to David Thomson who still runs the company now concentrated in the Hunter Valley.

In 1970, Holland & Thomson needed a base for drilling operations in the Central West of NSW and we bought a controlling interest in Joma Engineering Pty Ltd in Orange which then had three employees. We purchased land and built a new factory. In due course Joma grew in its own right specialising in automation and employing around forty people.

I remained Chairman of Joma until December 1996 following a takeover by the employees.

Also in 1970 I bought a small business in Sydney engaged in Centrifugal Clutch manufacture (Lawrence Throwgrip Clutches Pty Ltd). I regarded this as my principal employer since it

provided me with offices at home and at the factory. I retired from LTC in November 1996.

From 1985 to 1996 I was on the Board of the Australian Drilling Industry Training Committee Ltd located at Macquarie University. I was Chairman for three years.

I am a Senior Member of the Institution of Radio and Electronics Engineers and a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers. Australia.

My wife Ruth and I have lived at Forestville, Sydney since 1952 and raised our seven children here.

I have always been in some kind of strife. When H.M.A.S. Hawkesbury sailed north to Papua New Guinea for the first time the "Bedstead" radar antenna above the foremast stuck at dead ahead and refused to rotate. I managed to convince the captain that it was better to risk losing the ship to enemy aircraft than to send me aloft and risk the Navy's valuable investment in training me. Safely alongside the wharf in Milne Bay I climbed the mast and sat comfortably on the top with legs firmly locked around the antenna base housing. I cleaned the slip rings and brushes and called to my mate below to give it a try. He disappeared into the radar cabin and a healtly whirring sound left me basking in the joy of my skill and ability. Suddenly I realised that I was being swept off my perch by the rotating bedstead. Yelling loudly I grabbed the underside of the antenna and hung there slowly rotating around the mast. Far below I could see the bulk of the ships company gathering on the upper deck and a host of friendly natives on the wharf all fascinated by the antics of the radar mechanic.

My mate was still in the radar cabin checking that the repeat was working.

Now the specification states that the bedstead arrays rotated at one revolution per minute so it was only half a minute before I was hanging over the port beam. It seemed like hours. Of course my stupid mate finally emerged from the cabin and seeing me hanging there like a corpse from the yardarm rushed back and stopped the rotation. I remained hanging there whilst a debate ensued as to whether it would be better to return me to my

perch clock-wise or anticlockwise. In due course they brought me back very smoothly and we had no further trouble with the antenna.

## Alan Mangan

*The following is an extract of a letter written 17 December 1996 by Alan Mangan to Alex Richardson:*

Left Melbourne C of E Grammar School December 1 having completed "leaving year". Inducted into the army March 1942 and posted as a trainee telegraphist at Land Headquarters Signals Unit.

Transferred to RANR as Ordinary Seaman 28th August 1942 Official no. PM 5085. Transferred to RAN (HO) Official no. 26826. To HMAS Lonsdale 19th February 1943. (My papers show I was transferred to Radio Mechanics Branch on 15th September 1943) HMA Naval W/T Station Canberra 23rd September to 9th October 1943. HMAS Cerberus 10th October 1943 to 18th February 1945.

LORAN maintenance course 19th February 1945 to 16th March 1945. HMAS Kuttabul (LORAN fitting party) 17th March to 31st July 1945.

HMA Naval W/T Station Coonawarra 1st August 1945 watchkeeping.

Transferred to HMAS Melville as Port Maintenance on LORAN from December 1945 to 28th May 1946. Discharged 12th June 1946.

## Post War

Joined Department of Navy for about 3 months. Joined Elder Smith & Company September 1946. Resigned 1950.

Married Margaret Jessie Kerr on 2nd November 1946. Celebrated 50 years of married bliss this year. (Ed's note, this was written 17 December 1996). We have two boys David aged 46 years and Christopher aged 42 years. David and his

wife Anne have two children Matthew aged 12 and Tierney aged 8. Christopher and his wife Tina have two boys Joshua aged 13 and Shannon aged 10.

Studied accountancy at RMIT under CRTS. Qualified as an Associate of the Australian Society of Accountants in 1953.

Joined a timber company (AA Swallow Pty. Ltd.) as Assistant Accountant in 1950. Resigned 1959. Joined Queensland Stations Ltd 1959 as an Accountant. This was one of a number of pastoral land investment companies controlled by the Trustees of the Estate of the late William Charles Angliss. I subsequently was transferred to the family investment company, Investors Pty. Ltd, initially as Assistant Company Secretary and later as Company Secretary.

I retired in May 1988 at which time I was Secretary to the Trustees of the Estate and General Manager of the group of companies above referred.

In retirement I play some rather bad golf, lunch weekly (not spelled weakly) with a group of retired accountants, attend meetings of a Probus club, and my Masonic lodge, both of which I find informative and interesting.

(Editor's note: Alan then states that he whereas he remembers the names listed by Alex as being Alan's contemporary classmates back in 1943, he, Alan, has had no contact with any during the past fifty years.) Alan continues. Clyde Scaife was a doctor practising in Hamilton Victoria, and I will endeavour to make contact with him. I well remember Able Seaman Wilson who lived at Tea Gardens (sic) NSW, but I have not heard of him since the war. He joined the Rad. Mechs with another AB, who was a survivor from HMAS Armidale, but I am unable to remember his name.

---

### James (Jim) W McClure

Following is a copy of notes provided by Jim McClure to Alex Richardson:

Brief CV. J.W.McClure. DOB 5-12-24

1937-38 Junior Technical School  
Warrnambool Victoria

1939-42 School of Mines Ballarat. Elec/Mech  
Eng Diploma

1943 Joined RAN – FND Induction and  
Parade training 26881. To HMA  
Lonsdale for Melbourne Tech for  
Radar Course RAN 20

To HMA Signal Station Watson for  
Radar course

1944/5 Joined HMAS Stawell in Cairns –  
complete Radar fit out and thence to  
sea

1946-48 Demob and complete BEE course at  
University of Melbourne – Rejoin  
RAN as Sub Lt (L)

1949 Training FND, Watson, Rushcutter

1950 Joined HMAS Australia as Lieut (L)

1951/52 Joined HMAS Warramunga –  
proceed to Korea

1953 UK – ASTT project – technical  
courses – trials team experience

1954 Return to Australia – HMAS  
Kuttabul for Test and Tune Trials  
Team

1956 Standby and commission HMAS  
Voyager. Lt Cdr (L)

1957/60 Garden Island Dockyard – SWE &  
GESO Cdr (L)

1960 To USA Norfolk Virginia – Armed  
Forces Staff College

1961/63 Staff of ANA Washinton DC

1963/65 HMAS Melbourne Cdr WEO



1966/7 Navy Office Canberra – Weapons Electrical Directorate

1968/70 Navy Office – Light Destroyer Project Director Captain

1970/74 UK – Staff of HC DSTO. A/Cdre

1975/77 DST – Head Services Programmes Canberra

1978/79 Dept Defence. Cdre.

1979 (Nov) Retired

Then family activities, RSL and Rotary Club etc.

Editor's note. Given that some of Jim's later experiences while holding senior rank would likely be classified and not for publication, within all of this history there must be dozens of stories and anecdotes that would make fascinating reading for any Navy man.

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## Tom Rees

R.A.N RADIO MECHANICS ASSOCIATION

RAN Course 19 (H.O)

### Pre-enlistment

Born 27 October 1919, Moorlinch, Somerset, England. Arrived in Australia, Perth, October 1926.

### Basic education:

#### England .

Infants: Church of England School, West Pennard, Somerset

Primary, Abbey School, Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset 1st Standard

#### Australia

1926-1933: Highgate Hill Primary School, Perth, WA, 1 to 6th Standard

1933-1937: Perth Modern School - Government Secondary School, Subiaco, WA. Passed Leaving Certificate - 1937

See Civilian Career for pre-enlistment employment.

### Enlisted

Port Adelaide 19 January 1943 - P/A3499. Probationary sick berth attendant.

(Home port subsequently changed to Fremantle - F5239)

### Naval Service

#### *HMAS Cerberus*

19 January 1943 to 24 February 1943 New Entry Training

#### *HMAS Lonsdale*

25 February 1943 to 29 August 1943 Radio Mechanics Course

#### *HMAS Cerberus*

30 August 1943 to 23 September 1943. Qualified Radio Mechanic (W) 23 September 1943 A/g Leading Radio Mechanic 24 September 1943

#### *HMAS Rushcutter later (HMAS Watson)*

21 October 1941 to 15 March 1944 Radio Mechanics Course

#### *Radar Survey Depot. Leichhardt (Sydney)*

16 March to 15 June 1944

#### *HMAS Ladava (Milne Bay)*

Radar Base Staff. 3 October 1944 to 14 April 1945 - including temporary detachment to HMAS Swan for approximately 4 months as

ship's Radar Mechanic and Flotilla Mechanic Comm (D) on Swan.

***HMAS Kuttabull (Garden Island Sydney)  
Radar Base staff***

15 April 1945 to 25 August 1945

Confirmed as P.O. Radio Mechanic (R) 24 September 1945

**Demobilised**

13 September 1946 - HMAS Leeuwin

**Civilian Career**

Joined the Commonwealth Public Service in March 1938 as a Clerk in the Costing Section, Engineering Branch, Postmaster General's Department, Perth WA.

Transferred to Auditor General's Office, Northern Territory. Darwin, January 1940. In Darwin 1940 to 1941.

On February 20 1942 the MV 'Koalama'. on which I was returning to Darwin from leave, was bombed by the Japanese South of Wyndham and after a sojourn at the Drysdale Mission returned to Perth in March 1942 and spent approximately two months attached to the Audit Office in Perth before resuming duty with the Auditor General's Office, Northern Territory, at Alice Springs until December 1942.

After demobilisation rejoined the Auditor General's Office in Sydney in September 1946 as an Audit Inspector. Promoted to Central office in Canberra in June 1959 and retired as First Assistant Auditor General in October 1981. Appointed a Companion of the Imperial Service Order (I.S.O. ) in the January 1981 Honours list for meritorious Public service.

My formal qualifications were Fellow of the Australian Society of Accountants and Associate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators.

**Family**

Married Marcelle Margaret James in Sydney June 1947. Widower since November 1982. We had four sons Gregory (1950), Phillip (1952), Robert (1955) and Andrew (1960). Andrew died in June 1995.

Have three grand daughters - Sian ( 1984) Caitlin ( 1990) and Amy ( 1993) and two lovely daughters-in-law Sharon (Robert's ex-wife) and Sue (Phillip's wife).

All the family live in Canberra except Gregory who is in business at the Gold Coast Queensland.

**Past Retirement**

Since retirement my interests are centred on family and golf. Member of the Federal Golf Club since 1962 and the ACT Veteran's Golf Association. Have been Hon. Auditor of the latter for some years.

Editor's note: Tom recalls names of members of his Melbourne Tech course 1943, RAN 19 (HO)

King RL - Roy (SA)

Shorland DA - Dave (Vic)

Richardson A (SA)

Laws MG (Q'ld)

Dawson H (WA)

Mills J – Happy (Vic)

Pearson RT – Tom (Vic)

Scaife C – Clyde (Vic)

Simons DJ – Blue (NSW)

Rees TR – Tom (ACT)

Silberberg P – Phil (Vic)

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**Alexander Compson Richardson**

Born 17-10-1921 – Unley, a suburb of Adelaide. Father worked in the Irrigation Department, Ral Ral Creek near Renmark. Transferred to Mount Gambier Sth Aust late 1930 after a spell in Kadina, Sth Aust where I started Primary School. Mt Gambier Primary School to QC (Qualifying Certificate) for High School in 1933.

1934-35-36 High School, Leaving Certificate at age 15.

1937-38-39 Roseworthy Agricultural College. RDA at age 18.

1940. Labourer in Pine forest Mt Burr near Millicent Sth Aust. Then piece work felling for sawmill.

1941,42 Canberra Forestry School. Dip For (Canb)

1943 Jan 5 to FND HMAS Cerberus

Feb to Aug Melb Tech Radio Course with opher 6 of class 19 RAN Course ie third full RANVR students with ex ship's Radio Officer Asbornjsen "Aspro" (Norwegian)

Late Aug – October FND Special Oscillators and RAN Radio

September 14 we became LRMs in perm RAN

October 43 to Jan 44 South Head Radar Course

Late Jan to Rushcutter for 1 day then Brisbane HMAS Moreton to assist fit out radar sets in HMAS Parkes when not assisting Allied ships' radar staff in repair work – good all round experience in many "new" radar sets

D Day to sea on HMAS Parkes till pay off in Fremantle December 1945

Closed radar down in Fremantle then Torrens in Adelaide. Drafted to Sydney May 1946 – maintenance Watson on many Allied equipment till demobilised at Leeuwin May 1947

June 47 to June 48 Mt Kustpo State Forest

June 48 to June 53 Mt Gambier State Forest

June 53 to May 60 Forest Management TPNG

1960 to 1981 Queensland Forestry Department

Retired 1981 developing interests in

a) Home garden course plus several friends

b) Lawn bowls at Moorbrook BC as inter alia Selector from 1977 to 1984

c) Fossicking and lapidary work

d) Travelling within Aust, England & continent, China, Japan back via a day in Rabaul renewing friends and forests after 25 + years absence, on second trip to New Zealand in 1986 broke a leg and very restricted since. Several months with our son in Kajang (25 miles from Kuala Lumpur)

1944 to Retirement village Nerang (Hinterland Gold Coast). With Betty we have initiated several attempts to steer "old ones" who come here to do little or nothing. Librarians – now have 20 helpers. Speakers Corner – monthly talk from "inmates". Saints & Sinners Social Group to stir them up with invited performers from Gold Coast groups.

PS Have you mended an ABK aerial at sea in a storm? Have you mended a 272Q in a storm at night near Timor and touched the hot end of a Klystron then when the bridge is trying to contact a commando group an hour or two from the Japs?

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## Phillip Grose Sullivan

The following account was prepared by Phil Sullivan January 6, 1997 and despatched to Alex Richardson.

Born May 1922 at Prospect S Aust. Followed the traditional Preimary School curriculum, and Secondary School. Matriculation. Graduated from University of Adelaide – BSc majoring in Chemistry.

2 (a) Original RANR service number is not available as this was not included in the discharge

certificate (Ed. Phil's RANR number was PA3480). Official No RAN HO 26880.	(4) Transferred to Sydney 62-72 as a Sales Engineer
2 (b). HMAS Cerberus 5-1-43 to 25-3-43 Ordinary Seaman	(5) Transferred to Adelaide 72-79 as Technical Sales
HMAS Lonsdale 21-3-43 (sic) to 16-9-43 Radio Mech (W)	(6) Bahrain 79-82 as Technical Officer
HMAS Cerberus 27-9-43 to 20-10-43	(7) New York 81-82 as Technical Officer for Caltex Petroleum Co.
HMAS Cerberus 21-10-43 to 17-11-43 Ldg Radio Mech	(8) Dallas 1982 Caltex Petroleum Co.
HMAS Rushcutter 18-11-43 to 26-5-44	(9) Adelaide 1983 Retirement
HMAS Ladava (Jon Jim) 27-5-44 to 7-7-44	Have since indulged in the hobbies that could not be fully enjoyed while on the move and have enjoyed:
Madang 22-9-44 to 21-10-44	Musical studies – organ and piano
Madang 22-10-44 to 22-5-45 A/PO Rad Mech	Painting – drawing, oil, pastel, watercolours etc
HMAS Kuttabul 23-5-45 to 6-7-45	Gardening – We have 1 ½ acres of garden to keep us fully occupied
HMAS Cerberus 7 Jul 45 to 16 July 45	Have enjoyed visits to South Head, Harman, Belconnen etc
HMAS Watson 17 July 45 to 21 Oct 45	Shirley and I would like to express our appreciation for the many in the Organisation (Ed. The RAN Radio Mechanics Association) who have made it such a success.
HMAS Watson 22 Oct 45 to 30 Jan 46 PO Rad Mech	
HMAS Rushcutter 31 Jan 46 to 7 Feb 46. Occupational DDN 6/46	

During time spent at Madang seconded to HMAS Swan (Tom Rees), HMAS Colac (Denys Irving), HMAS Cowra, HMAS Rockhampton. During these transfers visited Meous Wendi, Halmaheras, Moratai, Aitape and Wewak.

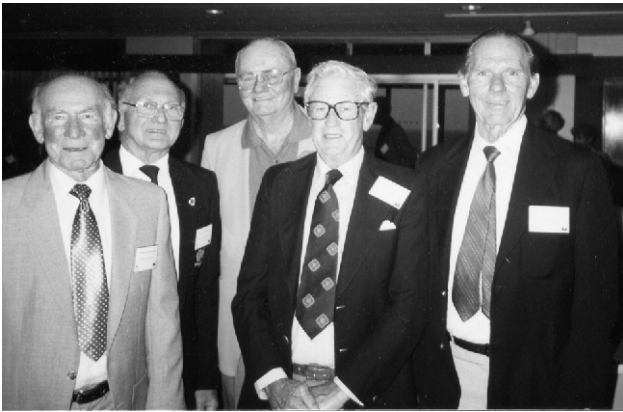
### 3. Post War Happenings

(1) Returned to Adelaide. Married wife Shirley in Adelaide and returned to Sydney to take a position with ICIANZ as a Plant Supervisor.

(2) Returned to Adelaide to help in family business

(3) Joined Caltex Oil Australia Pty Ltd as a Technical Officer in Adelaide





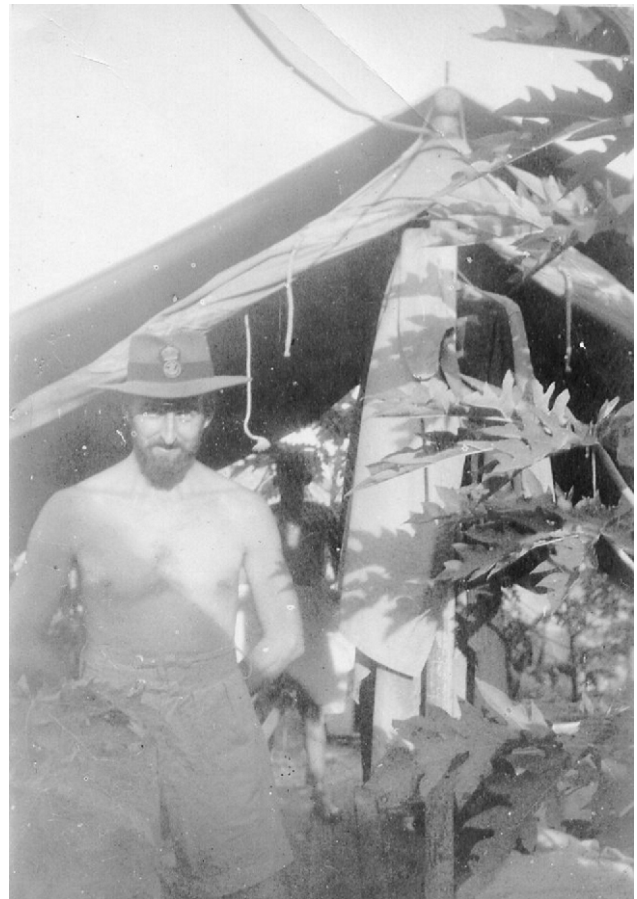
*Fifty years on. Taken at HMAS Watson during the 1994 RAN RM Association reunion in the Senior Sailors mess. L to R: Maurie Gallen, WM (Max) Arnold, Bill Hemmens, Don Crowley, JG (Jim) Wallace.*



*Frank Bate and Gordon Frost, two Wiremen undergoing RM training at Melbourne Technical College, 1942. Photo taken in Collins Street, Melbourne*



*Alan Archibald, 1942*



*PORM Bill Metcalfe at Madang 1944. Note the tropical rig of slouch khaki hat, shorts and no shirt.*

## Chapter 3 - The Bailey Boys



*Part of the second Bailey Boys course at University of Sydney, 1942. Back row L to R: Phil Norman Direct Entry Sub Lieutenant (Sp), Ron Whitten, Dick Coyle, John (Jock) Hornsby, Archie McArthur, Alistair Mackenzie, Bob Slaytor. Front row L to R: Dan O'Keeffe, Lt Strange RANR, Telegraphist Lt Cdr SW Francis, Sub Lt Peter Thwaites Instructor, John Medhurst. Note: Lt Strange and Telegraphist Lt Cdr Francis were in the Administration Staff at the RAN Radio School South Head Sydney, and Telegraphist Lt Cdr SW Francis was the Fleet Telegraphist.*

The following comprise extracts from data created by Historical Records of Australian Science, "The Bailey Boys" by Walter Fielder-Gill; "Radar at Sydney" by Robert Slatyer; an address given by Bob Slatyer at the Bailey Boys 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Reunion September 1994; and biographical notes compiled by John Medhurst. The author acknowledges all these references.

In 1941, the Department of Physics, University of Sydney was selected to train men in the science of Radio Location, later to become known as Radar. The major thrust for this was through the Royal Australian Air Force, which at the height of its influence established 142 ground radar installations in the SW Asia Pacific region. The Royal Australian Navy also participated in this program to a lesser degree than the RAAF,

mainly because the RAN had a limited number of ships in which radar could be installed and effectively operated. The man charged with the responsibility of developing and delivering the lengthy and high pressure training course was Professor Victor A Bailey, University of Sydney. A natural consequence was that Victor Bailey's charges came to be known as Bailey's boys, and subsequently, The Bailey Boys.

The first intake, mainly, but not all, second year undergraduates of Sydney University, commenced their training on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1941, concluding in February 1942. Thirty eight of these then went on to eight weeks administrative training at the University of Melbourne, and upon completion were commissioned as Pilot Officers RAAF. Then



followed twelve weeks training on secret radar specifics at RAAF Richmond.

Upon entering the initial training, the intention was that graduates would join the RAF to participate in the European war, but when Japan entered the war in December 1941, all were retained to assist in Australia's defence.

The second course commenced in March 1942 with undergraduates from five Australian universities. In this class were fifteen RAN trainees, the only RAN officers to be trained in the Bailey Boy program. Fourteen of the initial fifteen successfully completed the University of Sydney training. They were then sent to Flinders Naval Depot for 6 weeks officer training, followed by a period at what was to become HMAS Watson at Sydney's South Head. At South Head they familiarised themselves with contemporary radar equipment, and were then each sent to different ships and shore establishments for operational duties.

There were three more courses throughout 1942 and to January 1943, all to provide the RAAF with radar specialist officers. The Army then enrolled men in two courses, the last one concluding in March 1944. In total, there were 249 Bailey Boys. Of these, 160 were commissioned in the RAAF, 14 in the RAN and 75 in the Army.

It is well beyond the scope of this chapter to give even an abridged summary of the University of Sydney training content. However, the following will offer a glimpse into the education process provided to the Bailey Boys.

The accent was on understanding the basics of the technology by a thorough examination of the underlying mathematics and physics, supplemented where appropriate by exercises. Some of the topics included analyses of complex circuits using differential equations and a vector approach to the steady state, and the use of operators and complex numbers. These techniques were applied to concepts such as coupled circuits, transmission lines, attenuation and wave generation to name just a few. In all about 125 mathematical equations were examined and used. There were lectures on topics

such as thermionic valves, cavity resonators, types of oscillators, amplifiers, phase inverters and harmonic resonators. As well students studied metalwork, woodwork, the use of equipment and safety considerations. Wave form generation and propagation received a lot of attention. To assist in comprehending the advanced mathematical treatments, basic maths such as trigonometric and hyperbolic functions, differential and integral calculus and Fourier Analysis were thoroughly explored. Throughout, there were 34 major exercises to be completed, regular tutorials, and periodic one hour examinations.

The desired outcome of this intensive training program was to create a cadre of technical officers who would be capable of assuming lead roles in the design, development, installation, and on occasions the repair of obscure operational faults, of radar technology. As well, these men would be required to devise radar counter measures, to assist in the creation of maintenance handbooks for the various radar models being produced, to liaise with contractors and civilian manufacturers, to be the administrators of radar installations and to be the mentors of the maintenance technicians. All this after an incredibly short period of about 12 months training. Considering that all were second year university undergraduates aged around 19 upon commencement of their training, the desired outcome became a remarkable success.

Overall, the consensus opinion shared by the Bailey Boys is that the program was very worthwhile. There are however supporters and detractors in specific areas. Some feel that the exhaustive study of the underlying theory provided them with the ability to "think outside the nine dots" when addressing any of the problems encountered when operational, and that this was most valuable. There are others who feel that lesser theoretical treatment of some topics such as alternating current theory would have allowed more time to study some of the practical considerations such as antenna design, because antenna efficiency is key to the success of any radar. Perhaps Professor Alf Pollard's question summarises this apparent dilemma, "Could we have won the war without knowing about Fourier

Theory?" Alf Pollard's question is rhetoric, and we will never know the real answer.

RAN Bailey Boys served in the HMA Ships Australia, Shropshire, Hobart, Manoora, Bataan, Yandra, Kanimbla, Westralia, Faye C, Kybra, Townsville, Swan. As well as these shipboard responsibilities, Bailey Boys had different assignments as Port Radio Officers, Dockyard Officers, Instructors, Installation Officers, Radar Counter Measure Officers. They served in various Papua New Guinea east coast locations such as Madang, Lae, Aitape. As well they were on the New Guinea west coast, and further north and west of what is in 2004, Irian Jaya, into the Indonesian islands of Sulawesi and the Halmaheras. In terms of wide ranging operational locations, the cream on the cake, so to speak, was that two were in Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender.

Following are snapshots of the WW2 experiences of the 14 RAN Bailey Boys commissioned. Except for those entries marked with \*\*, the information has been provided courtesy John Medhurst.

**George Campbell :** Did not complete the Bailey Boy course. Demob 20/5/46 as Lt(Sp)

**Richard (Dick) Coyle:** 1942 Rushcutter & Watson. 1943-44 Radar Officer Manoora. 1944-46 Port Radar Officer Cairns and Darwin.

**Kenneth Andrew Glover \*\*:** Demob 20/5/46 as Lt(Sp)

**Collins Greaves \*\*:** Demob 24/1/46 as Lt

**John (Jock) Robert Hornsby:** 1942-43 Rushcutter & Watson. Directed to specialised work on Radio Counter Measures (RCM) Brisbane & Darwin. 1944-45 Shropshire and other ships with RCM equipment. Demob 18/2/1946 as Lt(Sp)

**Norman Louat \*\*:** Rushcutter, Broome, Moreton Westralia, Madang, Binger, Aitape. Demob 7/3/46 as Lt.



*Dick Coyle, Bailey Boy*

**Ronald (Ron) Joseph Lukies:** 1942-43 Rushcutter & Watson. 1943 Radar Section Navy Office preparing standing orders and instructions for radar personnel, analysis of radar faults and improving component design. Subsequent short service in HMASs Townsville and Swan. Later to Radar-Radio Workshop at Leichhardt, then to HMAS Bataan. Demob 1946

**Alistair John MacKenzie:** 1942-43 Rushcutter & Watson. 1943-45 Radar Officer HMAS Australia. Demob 17/9/45 as Lt (Sp)

**Archibald (Archie) John McArthur:** 1942 Rushcutter & Watson. 1943 Williamstown Dockyard, Brisbane Dockyard fitting of shipborne radar. 1944 New Guinea, maintenance of shipborne radar from Madang to Milne Bay. 1945 Brisbane dockyard radar maintenance. Demob 30/11/45 as Lt(Sp)

**Colin William McIvor:** 1942-43 Rushcutter & Watson. 1943 Radar Officer HMAS Hobart until Sydney return for damage repair. 1943-44 Yandra operator training and convoy work. 1944-45 Assistant PRO Melbourne. 1945 HMAS



Semaphore PRO Adelaide fitting out AMS.  
Demob 6/2/46 as Lt(Sp)

**John Philip Medhurst:** 1942 Cerberus OD  
Signal School. 1942-43 Rushcutter & Watson.  
1943-44 Radar Officer Kanimbla. 1944-45  
Instructing at Watson. 1946-47 Radar Officer  
Warramunga and Bataan. Demob 6/3/47 as  
Lt(Sp).

**Daniel (Dan) Frederick O’Keeffe:** 1942-43  
Rushcutter & Watson. Then to Brisbane fitting  
out basin doing radar installations. Then to Base  
Radar Milne Bay and Madang. Then Radar  
Repair shir Faye C working around New Guinea.  
1946 to Brisbane fitting out basin again. Demob  
19/11/46 as Lt(Sp)

**Robert (Bob) Thomas Slatyer:** 1942-43  
Rushcutter & Watson. April 43 – June 43 HMAS  
Hobart. June 43 – October 43 Watson writing  
A76 handbook. October 43 – January 46 Radar  
Officer Shropshire. January 46 – September 46  
HMAS Leeuwin. Demob 26/9/46 as Lt (Sp)

**Clive Reginald Taylor:** 1942-43 Rushcutter &  
Watson. 1943-46 Section 22, Office of Chief  
Signal Officer GHQ. SWPA Brisbane, RCM  
work. Demob 16/3/46 as Lt(Sp)

**Ronald (Ron) Henry Whitten:** 1942-44  
Rushcutter & Watson. Operator training HMAS  
Kybra. 1944-45 Radar Officer HMAS Hobart.  
1945-46 Cerberus. Demob 9/3/46 as Lt(Sp)

**\*\*** At the time that John Medhurst was compiling  
the foregoing information, Greaves and Glover  
were deceased, and Louat could not be located.  
Hence a lack of information about these three.

In conclusion, to quote Bob Slatyer, “Whatever  
the position to which they were appointed, the  
Navy Bailey Boys consider they were priveleged  
to have been able to attend the course and that the  
instruction given was of great value to them  
during their Service career.”



*Bailey Boys initial intake. Photo 24 June 1942 at HMAS Ruysheutter. Bak row L to R: Alistair Mackenzie, possibly FF Tregeagle, Richard Coyle, Robert Slatyer, Clive Taylor, Ron Whitten, Archie McArthur, Norm Louat. Centre row (all wearing caps) Ken Tiller, Fred Barnes, Joe Palliser, Col Estwick, Russ Corben. Front row L to R: Collins Greaves, John Medhurst, Georgew Campbell, Ken Glover, Ron Lukies, Dan O’Keeffe, Colin McIvor.*



*Bailey Boys reunion, September 1994. Standing L to R: A. Mackenzie, C. Taylor, A. MacArthur, R. Whitten, R. Coyle. Seated L to R: D. O’Keeffe, R. Lukies, J. Medhurst. Reclining: R. Slatyer*

## Chapter 4 - HORM Master List of Names

### Introduction

To understand fully the details in the Master List of names, the following points should be kept in mind.

1. The information in the various columns has been considered by the author to be those essentials which could be comfortably displayed on A4 size paper. There are more details for each man, such as dates advanced to higher levels, decorations awarded, Good Conduct badges awarded, examinations passed etc, which, had these been included, would have resulted in an unmanageably sized publication. Such information is available from [www.ww2roll.gov.au](http://www.ww2roll.gov.au).

2. The legibility of many of the Australian National Archives records from which these data were derived, is generally poor, some even being quite unreadable. Thus omissions from some of the data recorded are to be expected

3. The ships and establishments listed in the right hand column are not necessarily in date order of appointment. As well, where a man has been appointed to a ship on more than occasion, that ship's name appears only once. For a brief description of what each ship was, or where each establishment was located, consult chapter 7, "HMA Ships & Establishments Manned by HORMs".

4. All recorded data in the columns have been verified from records such as DVA's [www.ww2roll.gov.au](http://www.ww2roll.gov.au), and Archives of Australia records

5. Regarding official number, column 3 has the official number given upon joining the RAN Reserve. Column 4 has the official number given when joining the permanent RAN, or when transferred from Reserve to Hostilities Only category. Where the notation "\_\_\_\_\_" appears, the man did not serve any time in this category.

6. For explanation of Rank at Demob, consult chapter 8, "Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations".

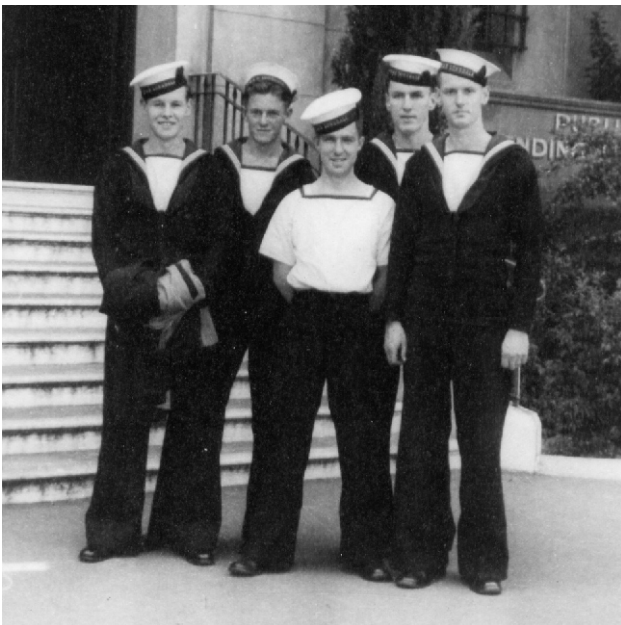
7. It is not known exactly how many HORMs were recruited and trained in the period 3/9/39 through 2/9/45. In the following list of 363 names, the author believes he has identified all where adequate records exist, but admits there may be a few who, despite his best Sherlock Holmes approach, may have escaped him.

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**Insert HORM Master List of Names  
Chart here**



*Taken at Melbourne Technical College 1942, 3 RAN class which for instructional purposes was attached to one of the many RAAF courses. RAN personnel L to R are Ninian Thompson, George H Parkes later to become Sbu Lt (Sp) Radar Officer, Cecil Grady, Horace Bullock, Frank Bate. The instructor, Thomas Joseph Daly later joined the RANVR as a Sub Lt (Sp) Radar Officer.*



*Melbourne Technical College 12 RAN Class. Photo taken outside the Melbourne Public Library, Swanston Street. L to R: Stan Powell, Alex Maclaughlin, Pat Mills, Hugh Ryan, Jack Alderson. The photo was taken by Jim Wallace.*



*Melbourne Technical College 1943. Back row L to R: Kevin Parker, Alfred (Alf) F Bruckner, W Roy Ellis, Kevin Parker, Mick Hayes, Jim McLure, Glenn Madden. Centre row L to R: Jack Wise, not known, Mr Kackson Instructor, Tom Chapman, Denys Irving, Front row L to R: CF (Bob) White Class Captain, CH (Cec) White, JB (Basil) Hennessy, Phil Sullivan, George Holland. Photo taken by RL (Bob) Steele.*





*PORM Bob Langevad ca 1945*



*PORM Coll Haydon. Photo taken at Central Railway Station, Sydney 1945. Note the khaki tropical uniform.*



*PORM Frank Bedford. Photo taken at Raglan Barracks England whilst HMAS Australia was undergoing repairs following Kamakazi attacks during the Phillipines invasion.*



*Watson 2 Class HMAS Watson, ca late 1944. Rear L to R: Jack Kemp, Brian Harvey, Clarrie Dietman. Front L to R: W/O Schoolmaster Fred McGill, Bill Wray, Joe Folkard, Reg Doran, Tony Dinham. Missing is Alan (Otto) Kruger who may have been the photographer.*

## Chapter 5 - Ranks

### An Explanation

For readers unfamiliar with Naval terminology of the 1940s, the following explanation and tables will help in understanding the apparent cryptic letters in the Rank column of the Names list.

The basic rank is represented by some letters in the body. For example PO for Petty Officer, or Lt for Lieutenant. This is further defined by letters to the right or left. For example LRM is Leading Radio Mechanic, and ElCdr is Electrical Commander. Finally there are the suffix letters in parenthesis to denote further specialisation such as (S) for wireless telegraphy equipment installed in shore establishments

Considering the ranks covered in this history, the hierarchy of non commissioned ranks was:

Ordinary  
Able  
Leading  
Petty Officer  
Chief Petty Officer

For commissioned ranks the hierarchy was:

Midshipman  
Sub Lieutenant  
Lieutenant  
Lieutenant Commander (historical  
Lieutenant in Command)  
Commander  
Captain  
Commodore  
Rear Admiral

As well, for those non coms commissioned “from the ranks”, there were the titles of Commissioned and Senior Commissioned. Thus Commissioned Electrical Officer, Senior Commissioned Engineering Officer etc. These two positions related in a rather loose fashion to Sub Lieutenant and Lieutenant respectively.

#### Letters to the left

A Acting. That is temporary appointment  
L Leading  
PO Petty Officer  
Ch Chief (Petty Officer)  
El Electrical. That is a specialisation in electrical technology  
Inst Instructor. Typically those with professional qualifications in teaching

C Commissioned

#### Core Letters

RE Radio Electrician. This was the name change from PORM as from 1947  
RM Radio Mechanic  
WM Wireless Mechanic. 1942 title changed in 1943 to Radio Mechanic  
S/Lt Sub Lieutenant  
Lt Lieutenant  
LtCdr Lieutenant Commander  
Cdr Commander  
Capt Captain  
Cmdr Commodore  
RAdm Rear Admiral



## Suffixes

- (L) Electrical
  - (R) Radar
  - (S) Wireless Telegraphy (W/T) equipment in shore establishments
  - (W) Radar & W/T
  - (Ty) Temporary
  - (Sp) Specialist. Generally the radar officers specially trained at University.
- 



*RM Trainee Jack Alderson at Melbourne Technical College ca 1942*



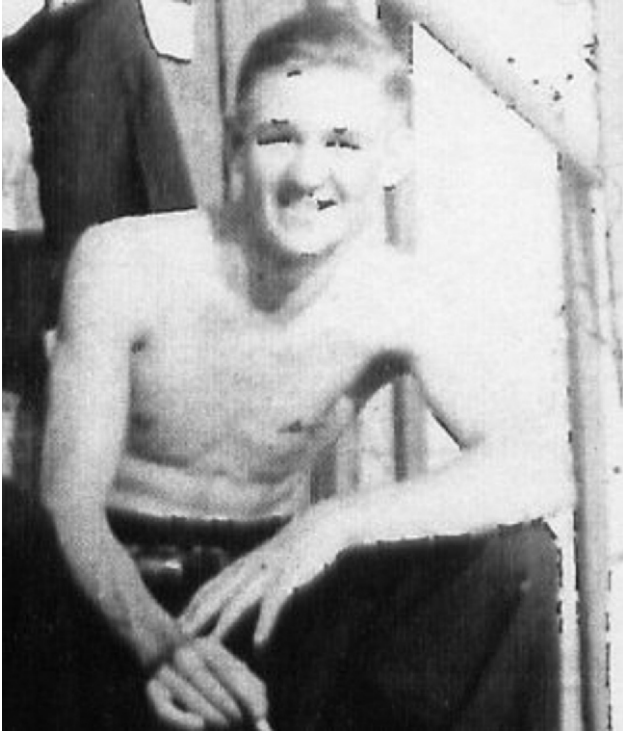
*L to R: Bill Johnson, Jim West, Bill Pennington in Collins Street, Melbourne 1942 (obviously Winter time)*



*Mrs Hill's boys, 1942. L to R: Keith Fraser, Mrs Hills, Basil Balme, Bill Pennington, Ken Tiller, Russell Corben.*



*PORM Max Hylton's wedding, 22 July 1944 at the Rose Bay Methodist Church. L to R: PORM Les Murfett, Mary Anderson Bridesmaid, PORM Maxwell Eriuc Hylton (the groom), Louisa Iris nee Davis Hylton (bride), Patricia Davis Bridesmaid, PORM Kevin Charles Moore.*



*PORM Reg Dyson. Photo taken at Raglan Barracks England whilst HMAS Australia was undergoing repairs following Kamakazi attacks during the Phillipines invasion.*



## Chapter 6 - Melbourne Technical College & Training



*Senior staff Melbourne Technical College ca1941. Note the RAAF representation*

### Melbourne Technical College

During the years of WW2, Melbourne Technical College provided much valuable basic training in a number of trades to the three branches of the armed forces, to the War Industry Factory Board and to the Aircraft Production Department. Following is an extract of the book "The Tech" by Stephen Murray-Smith and Anthony John Dare 1987:

#### Defence Training: A Summary

The college had trained 11,000 servicemen by May 1943. Courses in twenty eight different subjects had been provided for the army, thirteen for the air force, and one for the navy\*. War Industry trainees had been trained in seventeen trades for the Factory Board, and six for the Department of Aircraft Production. Training continued through 1943 and 1944, and was only closed down in 1945. By June 1944 there were 106 instructors at the college engaged full time on defence training work, 89 for the air force\*\*, 15 for the army, and 32 for the Factory Board.

By the end of the war over 20,000 trainees had completed courses at the Melbourne Technical College, representing about one sixth of those trained throughout Australia during this period. The precise numbers trained at the college were as follows:

RAAF	15,801
Army	4,813
Navy	403***
Factory Board	2,011
Total	23,028

Editor's note;

\* This was the Wireless/Radio Mechanic basic training

\*\* Often Navy trainees were in class together with RAAF trainees.

\*\*\* The make up was as follows:

Wireless Mechanics	343
--------------------	-----

Electrical Fitters	12
Ordnance Fitters	12
Elec. & Ord. Fitters	12
Ordnance Mechanics	12
Electrical Mechanics	12

The program was one of continuous 5 days per week 7 hours per day (plus lunch and tea breaks), supplemented by one and a half hours supervised study at HMAS Lonsdale five evenings each week. Typically this course of training would continue for 6 months.

In broad terms, the topics covered were Mathematics, Electrical & Radio theory, the latter two being reinforced with practical demonstrations and workshop activities.

The 1945 Melbourne Technical College Prospectus shows a coat of arms, with the latin motto Perita Manus Mens Exulta. A literal translation is Skilful Hands Cultivated Minds

### Mathematics

HCF. LCM. Fractions- vulgar and decimal

Roots & Indices

Logarithms

The Slide Rule

Symbols & their uses – Algebra

Equations – simple, bracketed and fractional

Trigonometry

Geometry & Graphs

Simultaneous equations

### Electrical Theory

The electronic structure of matter

The effects of a current

The electric motor

Measuring instruments

The transformer

The inverter & multivibrator

Induction coil

Electromagnetism

Capacitance

### **Melbourne Technical College Wireless Training Program.**

As with any service organisation, there were rules to be observed by the students. These covered class times, break periods, College property, dress, behaviour, smoking, loss of property, use of the workshops and classrooms, study rooms, mail and phone calls, visitors. Following are a few of these rules:

“Trainees are responsible for broken windows, apparatus or other damage to property and must pay for the damage caused”.

“Trainees are required to pass from room to room in an orderly and quiet manner”

“Trainees must clean up their machines and workshops, place their chairs on the tables and remove debris before breaking classes.”

“The College will appoint a Course Orderly for each course. The Course Orderly will prepare a roster and appoint for each day a blackboard orderly, a paper orderly and two cleaners”.

“Telephone calls in or out are not permitted by Trainees unless there is a state of emergency. A public telephone is located on the corner of Bowen and Latrobe streets, and another on the corner of Lonsdale and Russell Streets”

“The Instructor’s ‘Leave Pass’ enables a Trainee to leave the class room, but not the building. No other Trainee may leave the class room until the ‘Pass’ has been returned to the Instructor”

Electrostatics

Alternating currents

Batteries and lead acid cells

Electrical and electronic components and symbols

### Radio Theory

Ionospheric behaviour

Waves – sound and radio

The decibel

Frequency amplifiers

Simple and delayed automatic volume control

Power amplifiers

Oscillators. Modulation

The thermionic valve

The simple transmitter

Detection

Amplification

Master oscillator controlled transmitters

The superhetrodyne receiver

Power supplies

Transmission lines

Antennae & feeders

The printed notes provided to the trainees were well illustrated with diagrams, written in unambiguous easy to comprehend English, and comprised approximately 130 of today's A4 sized paper. Thus a combination of well planned and organised quality lectures, fully equipped laboratory facilities, and comprehensive reference notes together assured a high level of passes for the students.



*PORM Max Arnold, 1945*





*RW (Bill) Boswell, 1964*



*Radio Mechanic transport 1942. Because of the severe petrol shortages, this vehicle, like many others of the time, was powered by gas produced from a unit mounted on the front bumper bar. The unit burned charcoal to produce gas to be burned in the engine cylinders.*



*Radio Mechanics under instruction at Melbourne Technical College 1943. Members of RAN Class 26. Photograph from Melbourne "Age" 1943. L to R: William Leoni, David Hodgkinson, Jack North, Ray Burton, N.K., Pat Devery, N.K., Instructor E Brighthorpe, N.K., Note: Known names of 26 RAN Class members were Peter Arnoldt, Brian Baldcock, Robert Brigden, Raymond Burton, Keith Crowley, Patrick Devery, James Dingwell, Peter Gillespie, Thomas Gulson, Guy Harding, David Hodgkinson, William Leoni, Ron Machar, Thomas Palmer, Trevor Phipps, Kevin Randles, Hilton (Tony) Ramsay, Jack North, Maurice McAully.*

## Chapter 7 - HORM HMA Ships and Establishments

(As at June 2005)

Listed below are the names of HM Ships and shore establishments in which HORMs served prior to December 1945. Although this list is comprehensive, it is likely that some small vessels such as coasters, HDMLs etc may have been missed.

S denotes ship. EH denotes HMA named shore establishment. EG denotes a shore establishment by geographical location. A denotes a geographic area. See footnote #4 for other abbreviations.

Adelaide . . . . . S . . . . . Improved Town class light cruiser

Aitape. . . . . EG . . . . . North east coast Papua New Guinea ca Lat 3 deg S

Alexhaven . . . . . EG . . . . . Near Madang (See Madang)

Ambon . . . . . EG . . . . . Small Indonesian island in the Moluccas group west of Irian Jaya and south of Halmaheras

Ararat . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Armidale . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Arunta. . . . . S . . . . . Tribal class destroyer

Assault . . . . . EG . . . . . Amphibious Operations Training Establishment. Port Stephens NSW

Australia . . . . . S . . . . . County class heavy cruiser



*Radar Mechanics and Radar Operators HMAS Australia ca 1944. Back row L to R: PORM Arthur Capel, PORM Colin Haydon, PORM name not known. The other three sailors in round rig were un-named Radar Operators. Note the rig of the day was khaki tropical*

Balikpapan . . . . . EG . . . . . South east coast of Borneo

Barcoo . . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate

Barwon . . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate

Basilisk . . . . . EH . . . . . Port Moresby





Chinampa . . . . .	S . . . . .	52 feet 60 tons stores lighter
Colac . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Condamine . . . . .	S . . . . .	River class frigate
Coonawarra . . . . .	EH . . . . .	Darwin
Cootamundra . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Coral Sea . . . . .	A . . . . .	Area south of PNG and east of Cape York peninsula
Cowra . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Culgoa . . . . .	S . . . . .	River class frigate
Deloraine . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Derwent . . . . .	EH . . . . .	Originallt Cerberus VI. Became Derwent 1/8/1940. Became Huon 1/3/1942. Hobart
Diamantina . . . . .	S . . . . .	River class frigate
Doomba . . . . .	S . . . . .	Abadare Class Minesweeper, ex HMS Wexford. 750 tons
Dreger Harbour . . . . .	EG . . . . .	East coast PNG ca Lat 5 S, Long 145 E
Dubbo . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Ecucha . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Emerald . . . . .	S . . . . .	ex WW1 tug. Sold 1923. Requisitioned 1939 for service as Examination Vessel. 189 tons
Falie . . . . .	S . . . . .	Coaster converted to serve as stores carrier
Faye C . . . . .	S . . . . .	Seine Trawler. Served as Channel Patrol, ASV & Radar Maintenance vessel. 51tons
Fremantle . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Garden Island . . . . .	EG . . . . .	Sydney
Gascoyne . . . . .	S . . . . .	River class destroyer
Gawler . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Geelong . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Geraldton . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Gilolo . . . . .	EG . . . . .	Morotai, Halmaheras Islands

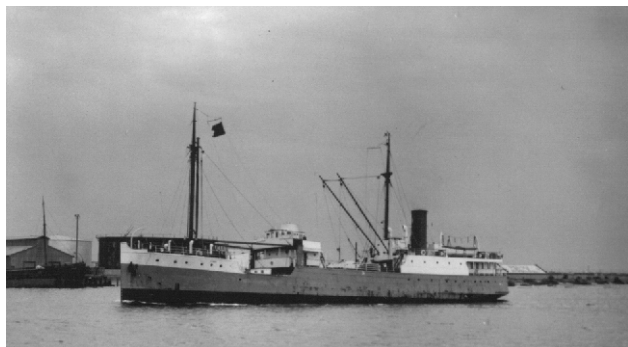
Goulburn . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Gladstone . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Glenelg . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Gumleaf. . . . .	S . . . . .	Seine Trawler. Served as AS maintenance vessel and Combined Ops training vessel
Gunbar . . . . .	S . . . . .	Coaster 480 tons. Served as Aux. Minesweeper & BDV
Gympie . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Halmahera . . . . .	A . . . . .	Indonesian island group on the equator between Long 127 & 129 deg E
Harman . . . . .	EH . . . . .	Canberra
Hawkesbury. . . . .	S . . . . .	River class frigate
Hobart. . . . .	S . . . . .	Modified Leander class light cruiser
Hollandia . . . . .	EG . . . . .	North coast Indonesian New Guinea (Irian Jaya) near PNG border
Horsham . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Huon . . . . .	EH . . . . .	Hobart
Inverell . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Inverloch . . . . .	EG . . . . .	Located at Venus Bay, on Eyre Peninsula SA. Ca Lat 33 S Long 134 E.
Ipswich . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Japen Island. . . . .	EG . . . . .	Small Indonesian island in Cenderawasih Bay off north coast of New Guinea. Aka Yapen Island
Jon Jim . . . . .	S . . . . .	Trawler. Served as Anti Submarine Maintenance vessel
June . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Kalgoorlie. . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Kanimbla . . . . .	S . . . . .	Armed Merchant Cruiser
Kapunda . . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper
Katoomba. . . . .	S . . . . .	Troop and supply ship. Also Bathurst class minesweeper
Kiama. . . . .	S . . . . .	Bathurst class minesweeper

Kuramia. . . . . S . . . . . Timber passenger ferry. 335 tons. Served as BDV

Kuranda. . . . . EH . . . . . Commissioned shore establishment at Cairns

Kuru. . . . . S . . . . . Patrol Boat

Kuttabul. . . . . S . . . . . Depot ship. .Moored in Sydney Harbour and torpedoed by Japanese midget submarine



*"Kybra" later HMAS Kybra*

Kybra . . . . . S . . . . . Merchant ship requisitioned and converted as a training ship for Radar Plotters

Lachlan . . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate

Ladava . . . . . EH . . . . . Shore establishment Milne Bay (see Milne Bay)

Lae . . . . . EG . . . . . East coast Papua New Guinea ca Lat. 6 deg. South

Langemak (Langemark) . . EG . . . . . Near Finschafen PNG

Lanka . . . . . EH . . . . . Naval base Colombo

Larrakia. . . . . S . . . . . 12 tons motor vessel. Served as CPB, BDV, ASR, EV

Latrobe . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Launceston . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Leeuwin. . . . . S . . . . . Fremantle WA

Leichhardt . . . . . EG . . . . . Inner Sydney suburb. Stores and radar/radio repairs

Lismore . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Lithgow. . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Lonsdale . . . . . EH . . . . . Port Melbourne

Lusair . . . . . EG . . . . . Commissioned shore establishment at Torokina Solomon Islands 5/3/45 to 20/10/45

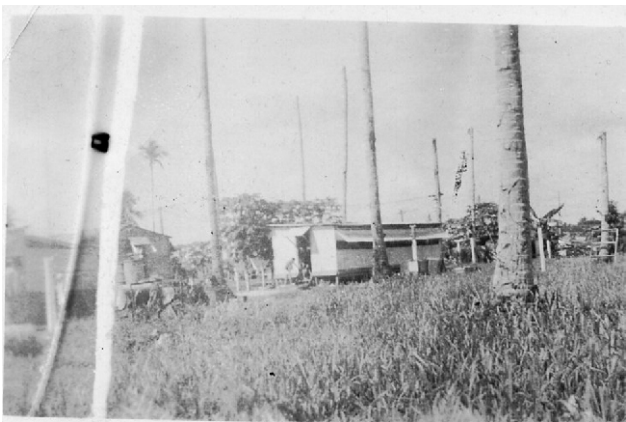
Luzon . . . . . A . . . . . Northernmost main island of The Philippines

Macquarie. . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate



*Inside Madang transmitting station,  
1944*

Madang . . . . . EG . . . . . East coast New Guinea ca Lat 5 deg S Long 145 deg E



*Madang transmitting station, 1944*

Magnetic . . . . . EH . . . . . Townsville

Maitland . . . . . EH . . . . . Commissioned shore establishment at Newcastle NSW  
1/8/1940 to 21/9/46

Malabar Hills . . . . . EG . . . . . British naval establishment Bombay

Manoora . . . . . S . . . . . Armed Merchant Cruiser

Manus Island . . . . . EG . . . . . Part of Bismark Archipelago ca Long 146 East Lat 2 deg  
South

Marrawah . . . . . S . . . . . Coastal vessel (472 tons disp.) converted to minesweeper.  
Operated in Bass Strait



Maryborough . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Meios Woendi . . . . . EG . . . . . Small Indonesian island in Cenderawasih Bay near Japen Island

Melville. . . . . EH . . . . . Darwin

Merauke. . . . . EG . . . . . South coast Indonesian New Guinea (Irian Jaya) ca Lat 9 deg S Long 140 deg E

Merkur . . . . . S . . . . . 6,000 ton motor vessel used as a stores replenishment vessel. Mixed MN and RAN crew

Mildura . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Milne Bay. . . . . EG . . . . . Extreme SE coast Papua New Guinea

ML427 . . . . . S . . . . . See Note 1

ML804 . . . . . S . . . . . See Note 1

ML811 . . . . . S . . . . . See Note 1

ML818 . . . . . S . . . . . See note 1

Moratai . . . . . EG . . . . . Island in the Halmahera Group ca Lat 3 deg N Long 128 deg E

Moreton. . . . . EH . . . . . Brisbane

Murchison . . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate

Napier. . . . . S . . . . . N class destroyer

Nauru . . . . . EG . . . . . Independent Pacific nation

Nepal . . . . . S . . . . . N class destroyer

Nizam. . . . . S . . . . . N class destroyer

Navy Office. . . . . EG . . . . . St Kilda Road Melbourne

Nirimba . . . . . EH . . . . . Sydney western suburbs

Noumea. . . . . EG . . . . . On island of New Caledonia ca Lat 22 deg S 166 deg E

Ocean Island . . . . . EG . . . . . Lat 1 S Long 167 E. Near Nauru Island

Olive Cam . . . . . S . . . . . Trawler 291 tons. Served as AMS

Oro Bay. . . . . EG . . . . . East coast PNG near Pepondetta

Parkes . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Penguin . . . . . EH . . . . . Middle Head Sydney

Ping Wo. . . . . S . . . . . Yangse river boat

Pirie . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Platypus . . . . . S . . . . . Submarine depot ship, destroyer depot ship

Port Moresby . . . . . EG . . . . . Capital PNG

Quadrant . . . . . S . . . . . Q class destroyer

Quiberon . . . . . S . . . . . Q class destroyer

Quickmatch . . . . . S . . . . . Q class destroyer

Rabaul . . . . . EG . . . . . City of East New Britain, ca Lat 4 deg S Long 152 deg E

Rockhampton . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Rushcutter . . . . . EH . . . . . Rushcutters Bay, Sydney

Saidor . . . . . EG . . . . . East coast PNG Lat 5 S Long 146 E

Samarai . . . . . EG . . . . . Small island extreme SE of Papua New Guinea

Shepparton . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Shoalhaven . . . . . S . . . . . River class frigate

Shropshire . . . . . S . . . . . County class heavy cruiser

Strahan . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Station 284 . . . . . EG . . . . . Non commissioned shore establishment RDF school at  
Sydney South Head

Stawell . . . . . S . . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Sterna . . . . . S . . . . . 40 ton Trawler. Served as Radar Repair ship. Formerly  
GPV 952

Stuart . . . . . S . . . . . Scott class Destroyer

Sultan . . . . . S . . . . . RN destroyer

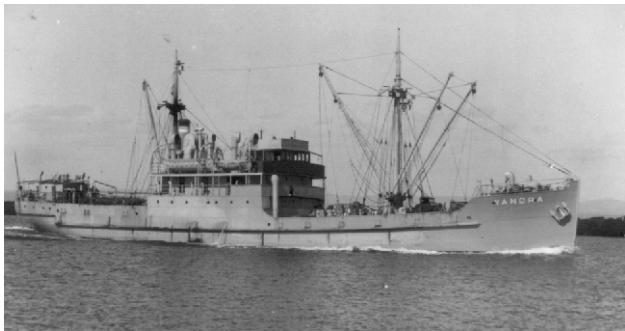
Swan . . . . . S . . . . . Grimsby class sloop

Tarakan . . . . . EG . . . . . Island close to east coast of Borneo

Tarangau . . . . . EH . . . . Drega Harbour, then Manus Island  
 Torokina . . . . . EG . . . . Solomon Islands  
 Tawi Tawi Island . . . . . EG . . . . Small Indonesian island in the Java Sea S & E of Borneo  
 Three Cheers . . . . . S . . . . Seine Trawler. Served as stores carrier, diving and pilot boat  
 Thursday Island. . . . . EG . . . . Cape York Peninsula  
 Tingara . . . . . S . . . . Training ship for boys  
 Torrens . . . . . EH . . . . Birkenhead South Australia  
 Townsville . . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper  
 Trincomalee. . . . . EG . . . . British naval establishment Colombo  
 Vendetta . . . . . S . . . . V&W Class Destroyer  
 Vampire. . . . . S . . . . V&W Class Destroyer  
 Vigilant . . . . . S . . . . Patrol Boat  
 Voyager. . . . . S . . . . V&W Class Destroyer  
 Wagga . . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper  
 Wewak . . . . . EG . . . . East coast PNG ca Lat 4 deg S Long 143 deg E  
 Whang Pu (Wang Pu). . . . S . . . . Yangse river boat  
 Warramunga . . . . . S . . . . Tribal class destroyer  
 Warrnambool . . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper  
 Warrego. . . . . S . . . . Improved Grimsby class sloop  
 Wednesday Island . . . . EG . . . . Cape York Peninsula  
 Warrego. . . . . S . . . . Improved Grimsby class sloop  
 Waterhen . . . . . S . . . . V&W class Destroyer  
 Watson . . . . . EH . . . . South Head Sydney  
 Westralia . . . . . S . . . . Armed Merchant Cruiser  
 Whyalla. . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper  
 Wilcannia . . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper

Willis Island . . . . . EG . . . . East of Cairns on Long 150 deg E

Wollongong. . . . . S . . . . Bathurst class minesweeper



*"Yandra" Later HMAS Yandra*

Yandra . . . . . S . . . . Merchant ship requisitioned and converted as a training ship for Radar Plotters.

Yarroma. . . . . S . . . . 12 ton motor launch. Used as CPB & with NAP.

Yunnan . . . . . S . . . . 2812 tons steamer. Used as ASIS.

#### NOTES

1. 35 Fairmile B Motor Launches were constructed 1943-44. Displacement 75 tons. LOA 112 feet. Beam 17.1 feet. Draught 5.4 feet. Speed 20 knots (ca 36 Kmph). Range 840 miles at 12 knots. Crew 16. Armament one 2 pounder, one 20 mm, two .303 vickers, two .303 Lewis, two DCTs, fourteen DCs.
2. Bathurst class minesweepers were also known as Corvettes. Of the 56 of these ships built for R.A.N. service, HORMs served in 49.
3. Sea going ships listed were all in commission prior to 1945. Later ships bearing the same name eg Voyager, Vendetta are not listed.

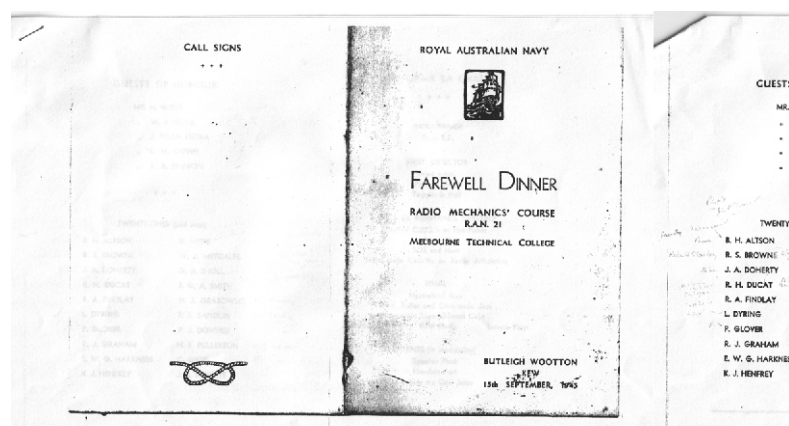


#### 4. Abbreviations:

AMS	Armed Merchant Ship	Lat	Latitude
AS	Anti Submarine	LOA	Length Overall
ASIS	Armament Stores Issuing Ship	Long	Longitude
ASR	Air Sea Rescue	MN	Merchant Navy
BDV	Boom Defence Vessel	NAP	Naval Auxiliary Patrol
CPB	Channel Patrol Boat	PNG	Papua NewGuinea
DC	Depth Charge	RDF	Radio Direction Finding
DCT	Depth Charge Thrower	WREN	Women's Royal Navy
EV	Examination Vessel	W/T	Wireless Telegraphy
GPV	General Purpose Vessel		



*The Gap, Watsons Bay, as viewed from Hut 4 HMAS Watson ca 1942*





## Chapter 8 - Glossary of Terms

### Glossary of Terms, Expressions, Place Names and Jargon Used in This Book

			numbered sequential and by year, to communicate to the RAN
(S)	As an example, a PO RM (S) specialised in W/T equipment in shore stations.	Corvette	Bathurst class escort vessel and mine sweeper. The RAN had 56 of these in service.
(W)	As an example, a PO RM (W) had training in both W/T and Radar equipment	CW	Continuous Wave. A basic form of radio transmission
AFO	Admiralty Fleet Order. Orders passed to the Royal Navy	Davit	The mechanical device fixed to a ship's side for the purpose of lowering a boat into the sea
AWL or AwoL	Absent Without Leave, ie unauthorised absense	Dhobey	Laundry
BB	Bailey Boy. Specialist Radar officer trained by Professor Bailey, University of Sydney	Dicky front	A mock shirt worn by some sailors to accentuate a manly chest.
CAFO	Confidential AFO. Confidential orders passed to selected recipients in the Royal Navy	Dog Watches	1600 to 1800 hours was the first dog watch, 1800 to 2000 was the second dog watch (See Watches)
Capt(L)	Captain with Electrical specialisation	El Cdr	Electrical Commander
CCNO	Confidential CNO. Confidential orders passed to selected recipients in the Royal Australian Navy.	Fibro Frigate	Colloquialism for HMAS Watson, the technical training establishment at North Head Sydney
CEIO	Commissioned Electrical Officer. A rank to which non commissioned electrical ranks, eg PO RM may be promoted	Foreigners	Items illegally acquired or manufactured using Navy materials and/or equipment (see rabbits)
ChRE	Chief Radio Electrician. Later title of Chief Radio Mechanic	GC stripe	Good conduct stripe. One for each of 3, 8 and 12 years of good conduct service. Worn on the left arm
CNO	Commonwealth Navy Order. The document,	Hard tack	Emergency rations, typically biscuits, tinned meat

HDML	Harbour Defence Motor Launch, typically about 70 feet long. Seagoing MLs were about 120 feet long	PORM	Petty Officer Radio Mechanic
		Port Wing	Left hand side of a ship's bridge
H.O.	Hostilities Only. That is for the duration of WW2 plus 6 months.	PTI	Physical Training Instructor
Inst Cdr	Instructor Commander	Pusser	Corruption of purser. Describes anything authorised or correct. See Tiddley
Jump ship	Desert.		
Left arm rank	Symbol to denote rank. Eg anchor for Leading rate, crossed anchors with crown for Petty Officer	PWO	Port Wireless Officer
		R.A.N.R.	Royal Australian Naval Reserve
LRM	Leading Radio Mechanic		
		RANVR	Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve
Lt(SP)	Lieutenant (Special purpose). For example RDF, Cryptography.	R/T	Radio Telephony
Make & Mend	Free time. Historically time for sailors to make and mend their uniforms	Rabbits	Souvenirs. Some acquired legitimately by price haggling with vendors. Some acquired by other methods
MCW	Modulated Continuous Wave. A modified form of radio transmission		
		RADAR	<b>R</b> ADIO <b>D</b> IRECTION AND <b>R</b> ANGING. An electronic device measuring the range, relative bearing and elevation of distant objects
Meals	Breakfast usually 0700. Dinner 1200. Tea 1600. Supper 1800.		
Native	Home locality. Thus a native of Perth is from Perth	RDF	Radio Direction Finding. Original name given to Radar
Ohmeter	An instrument for measuring electrical direct current resistance. Generally adapted to measure voltage and current also.	RE	Radio Electrician. Title which replaced PO RM
		Refit	Periodically a ship requires dockyard maintenance – boilers, heavy machinery, rigging etc
Pick	Anchor		
Pipe	Announcement eg pipe “Hands to supper” means time for the evening meal	Right arm rate	Symbol to denote occupation. Eg crossed



	flags for visual signaller, crossed cannons for gunner		personnel. Not so in the RAN
Round rig	Junior sailors' uniform – round cap, bell bottom trousers. (See square rig)	Vibrator	A little device operated usually from 12 volts DC producing 50 cycle pulses for conversion to 230 volts AC
S/Lt	Sub Lieutenant		
Ship's Company	The ship's complement of all personnel	Wardroom	Officers' mess
Ships in Reserve	A ship or group of ships "mothballed" such that with limited time and effort could be recommissioned quickly	Watches	Middle watch, midnight to 0400. Morning watch 0400 to 0800. Forenoon watch 0800 to noon. Afternoon watch noon to 1600. First dog watch 1600 to 1800. Second dog watch 1800 to 2000. First watch 2000 to midnight.
Ship's pilot	Merchant Navy officer specially trained to navigate foreign ships in and out of ports	WM	Wireless Mechanic. Earlier title of Radio Mechanic
Square bashing	Learning to march, counter march, salute etc.	WMQ	Wireless Mechanic Qualifying
Square rig.	Uniform worn by Petty Officers, and others such as Stewards, Writers. Typically three button jacket, white shirt, black tie	<hr/>	
SSB	Single Side Band. A modified form of radio transmission		
Star shell	Special explosive fired at night to burst at about 1000 feet and illuminate the surrounds		
S/Torpedoman	Seaman torpedoman		
Swattie	Navy jargon for a soldier		
Tiddley	Describes anything unauthorised . See pusser.		
Tot	For years, the Royal Navy issued a "tot" of rum daily to all non commissioned		

## Acknowledgments

There are many people who have contributed time and material to the creation of this book. Some have done a lot, some have done a little, and collectively the whole has been a remarkable exploration into the past, resulting in a very satisfying outcome.

The men who provided the cameos, those who provided historical data, photographs and service documents are some. The staff of National Archives of Australia, Canberra, gave very valuable support photocopying some 1,600 historic documents. The Department of Veterans' Affairs web site, [www.vw2roll.gov.au](http://www.vw2roll.gov.au) yielded much historical fact. The Grants Office, Department of Veterans' Affairs, has been most generous with financial assistance.

There are however, three who must be mentioned by name. One is Shirley Stevens, without whose infinite patience, forbearance and tolerance (to say nothing of the regular cups of fortifying tea) this publication might have remained in draft form for the next decade. The second is my old buddy, whom I have known these past 59 years, John Saywell OAM. John has been a remarkable source of information and old photographs, all of which have added immeasurably to the interest and appeal of this history. The third is my good friend and expert publisher, Brian Engert. Brian took my accumulated muddle of texts, photos and other material, waved his magic wand, and produced this professional looking document.

The only equitable way to recognise everyone else is to record contributors' names listed alphabetically, and to hope that I do not forget anyone. Should this be the case, I offer my apologies and claim human frailty.

Baird John

Baldock Brian

Balme Basil

Coyle Gwen

Crow George (Jim)

Doran Reg

Gibson Anne (Polly Woodside Museum)

Gillam Sandy (RMIT Archivist)

Gillespie Peter

Glover Peter

Gulson Tom (Neil)

Hoskins Allen

Kennedy Kevin

Labone Reg

Laughton John

Linton Bob

McDonald Reuben

McDonnell Jim

Palmer Tom

Pritchard Maurie

Ramsay Hilton (Tony)

Routh Russell

Saunders Norm

Saywell John OAM

Scaife Clyde

Shackleton Ian

Slatyer Bob

Weatherall Leslie (National Archives)

West Jim

Woodward Greg